THE Public Interest

NUMBER 10, WINTER 1968, PRICE: $1.50

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Pollution & Poverty:
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THE PUBLIC INTEREST is published quarterly by National Affairs, Inc., and appears in Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter issues. Its office of publication is located at 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. Subscription price: $5.00 per year. Second class postage is paid at New York, N. Y. © 1968 by National Affairs, Inc.

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404 Park Avenue South, N. Y. 10016

THE PUBLIC INTEREST *is sponsored by Freedom House as part of its educational program and as a contribution to – the public interest. But the views expressed in the magazine are to be attributed only to the authors and, where appropriate, the editors. Similarly, views expressed by Freedom House are not necessarily shared by the editors, contributors, or members of the publication committee.*

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The crises in welfare

DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

In the course of the Second Session of the Ninetieth Congress, the House of Representatives by near-unanimous action approved what must surely be the first purposively punitive welfare legislation in the history of the American national government. On the initiative of the Ways and Means Committee, the House inserted provisions in the Social Security amendments of 1967 which deny federal funds for any further proportionate rise in the number of children being supported by the Aid to Families of Dependent Children program, thus placing enormous pressure on the mothers of such children to go to work, and which also institute formal investigations to determine who and where are the fathers. Inasmuch as no effort was made to conceal the fact that these provisions were designed to halt the rise in *Negro* dependence on the AFDC program, the House action might also be considered the first deliberate anti-civil rights measure of the present era.

The targets of the legislation – weak and abandoned women, helpless and surely innocent children – are equally without precedent. Dickens would have been hard put to invent a credible sponsor. The Mayor of New York declared that, if enacted, the legislation would cause a "thundering crisis" in his city. The same would be true of a dozen cities, half of them even now going through the shudders of near insurrection. But there was no flinching in the House, and in Washington little more than embarrassed silence accompanied by

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hurried moves to set things right in the Senate and hope for the best in the conference. But for all this, on balance, the House move was probably a useful one, since it brought into the open the mounting crises in the American welfare system, all of which were worsening as a result of the general disinclination to acknowledge that they even existed.

The arithmetic of the present situation is clear enough. The 1960's have seen an economic expansion in the United States of all but unimagined proportions. The *increase* in the Gross National Product each year now routinely matches the *total* GNP of the early 1930's. Yet with each year of growing affluence the number of persons dependent on public charity also grows. In many cities the growth has been quite startling. New York is now at the point where 10 per cent of its population and 20 per cent of its children live on welfare. The relationship of mounting dependency to escalating violence demands further explanation, while the prospect that both will lead to a massive withdrawal of support for programs to eliminate poverty and break down racial barriers is rapidly becoming a reality. After a generation of something less than benign neglect, the time is at hand for a thorough reassessment of public welfare.

The *first* of five general points this paper will make about the welfare situation is that the rising incidence of dependency in the United States has not been distributed evenly across the full spectrum of welfare categories.

Anything but. Old age assistance, for example, once the central activity of the federal welfare program, has shown a steady relative decline, in direct response to increasing national wealth and the widening coverage of social security insurance programs. In this case forecasts have been perfectly sound. In 1940, 2,066,000 persons were receiving old age assistance, a rate of 288 per 1,000 of population aged sixty-five and over. By the end of 1966, more than a quarter century later, the number of OAA recipients, in a much larger population, was still only 2,073,000, and the rate had dropped to 113. In 1940, 3,618,000 persons were receiving general assistance, such as Home Relief. At the end of 1966, this number had dropped to 663,000. That year was a particularly strong one for the economy, and there were declines in the number of recipients for almost all welfare programs, with one conspicuous exception — Aid to Families of Dependent Children.

In 1940, there had been 891,000 children supported by this federal program. By the end of 1966 there were 3,526,000. With parents and caretakers the total came to 4,666,000. (It has now passed 5 million.) The recipient rate for children had risen from 22 per 1,000 population under eighteen years of age to 48. During 1966 the number of such children increased 6.3 per cent, and the cost of the program, 17.4 per cent. At a monthly cost of $184.6 million, the AFDC program

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had now passed Old Age Assistance as the most expensive federal welfare program, and had become perhaps the leading conundrum of American domestic policy.

The view from New York

In New York State this uneven development has been even more accentuated. By the mid 1960's, most public assistance programs in New York were either steady or declining in terms of numbers (excepting, of course, the newly established Medicare and Medicaid programs). The number of persons on AFDC, however, was rapidly and unaccountably rising. By January 1967, the total number of AFDC recipients at 653,144 was almost ten times that of 1945. In 1964, before the medical assistance programs came into effect, AFDC accounted for more than 70 per cent of welfare recipients in the state, and more than half of welfare expenditures. From 1953, the end of the Korean War, to the beginning of 1967, the number of children supported by the program increased 407 per cent and approached the half million mark. There had been an increase in the total number of children under eighteen, but the number of children on welfare had increased at a rate ten times greater during this period.

The costs of welfare, shared in roughly equal portions at the federal, state, and local levels, rose accordingly. During the decade 1955–1965, state and local expenditures more than doubled, from under $300 million to over $600 million, and in the latter year the total cost nudged the billion dollar level for the first time. In his annual message to the legislature of that year, Governor Rockefeller described this phenomenon of rising prosperity and rising welfare dependency as "the most serious economic paradox of our times."

During this period many suburban counties began for the first time to feel the effects of serious welfare problems. In 1966 the budgets of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties reached record highs, and, as *The New York Times* reported, "The increases are primarily the result of growing welfare costs."

But it was in New York City itself that something like a crisis arose.

Once again, the number of persons in the "adult programs," such as Old Age Assistance and Aid to the Disabled remained steady or grew slowly. It was dependent children whose numbers were swelling. In October 1966, as the numbers continued to rise, *The New York Times* noted that the number of dependent children in the city exceeded the entire population of Omaha or Akron. At the outset of 1967, in his annual budget request, Commissioner of Welfare Mitchell I. Ginsberg reported that toward the end of 1966 there had been 600,000 persons receiving public assistance, of whom "about 80 per

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cent were mothers and their children in families without a male member of the household to bring home a weekly paycheck." The anticipated caseload for 1967–1968 was 709,000, indicating that by the end of the period the number of welfare recipients would be approaching three-quarters of a million, and the annual rate of expenditure would be nearing $1 billion. Already more than 400,000 New York City children were on welfare. At the outset of 1968 the total had reached 800,000 and the number of children, 500,000.

At this point it was also becoming clear that the "at risk" population was even larger than the welfare rolls recorded. During the fiscal year 1966–1967, 128,000 new cases were opened in New York City, but *100,000 cases were closed,* which would suggest that welfare had become an on-and-off experience for an even larger porportion of the city's children. Not, of course, for all children. In 1965, when there were 288,624 children in all welfare cases in the city, the New York City Youth Board calculated that the average welfare rate per 1,000 population under eighteen years in Brooklyn was 170.0. This rate, however, ranged from 1.8 per 1,000 in one health area to 781.1 per 1,000 (sic) in another. Of the 113 health areas with recorded rates, 51 had fifty or fewer children per thousand on welfare, whereas 42 had two hundred or more. Probably never had the city known such contrasts: not between extreme wealth and extreme poverty, for the welfare population was living at a decent level by any historical standard, but rather between mass security on the one hand and mass dependency on the other.

On May 10, 1967, Welfare Commissioner Ginsberg went before a Senate subcommittee and declared that the nation's welfare system was "bankrupt" as a social institution.

II

Just so. What then are the prospects for reorganizing the system? This raises the *second* general point about the existing welfare system, namely that the nation is not likely to do anything much to change it.

What we can do is to improve it somewhat. It is an American fault to insist on extravagant goals — as if to set out to achieve anything less than everything suggests a lack of sincerity, manliness, or both — and to be exceedingly busy with other matters when it subsequently develops that little or nothing happened. The social history of the 1960's is already littered with the wreckage of crash programs that were going to change everything and in fact changed nothing, save possibly to diminish ever so slightly the credibility of those who claimed credit in advance for the achievements that never, somehow, came to pass.

The idea that the welfare system is not working is gaining cur-

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rency among the elite groups in business, politics, labor, churches, and universities that in normal circumstances legitimatize and direct government-managed social change in the United States. This means there is an opportunity to make a number of important, incremental advances. The danger, and probably also the likelihood, is that those who wish – and with good reason – for radical change will dominate the discussion and set an agenda so extreme that in the end little if anything will happen. This is a recurring dilemma in American life, and it is rarely resolved.

A word of further explanation is perhaps in order. The problem with changing the welfare system is not that the present system does not work, but rather that it does. It maximizes the advantages and conveniences of almost all the parties involved. It would be difficult, nigh impossible, to point to another government program of comparable importance – and equivalent potential for conflict and controversy – that works as smoothly as does welfare, or that makes as few difficult or dangerous demands on those who run the society. The present welfare system is the social equivalent of an automated factory: the input goes in and the output comes out untouched by human hands. If anything goes wrong, it is the machinery that is to blame. Moreover, the system is not costly. As a percentage of Gross National Product, social welfare expenditures are quite low in the United States as compared with other Western nations, and public assistance has consistently used up only about 1 per cent of the national income. In New York State, in the decade 1956–1965, the amounts budgeted for public assistance and work relief more than doubled, but, as a proportion of the state budget, welfare expenditures actually declined from 10.01 per cent to 8.98 per cent. It may very well be, as Senator Kennedy argues, that the present system of welfare destroys family life. But it does not endanger the public fisc. One of the paradoxes of affluence is that it permits a society, as it does an individual, to indulge in practices that are both expensive and ultimately harmful, but which appear pleasant or convenient in the short run. The United States economy has reached the point where it can sustain a full-scale land war in Asia with no significant cutback in domestic spending, and, yet, no increase in taxes. To such a behemoth, the cost of an annual increment in the number of welfare mothers is insignificant.

The costs of transformation

By comparison, the cost of transforming the system would disrupt a vast array of entrenched social arrangements, changing not only the distribution of wealth, but probably also the distribution of power. Perhaps the clearest idea as to how unlikely an occurrence this would be can be gained from our experience with the closely

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related – and every bit as serious problem – of unemployment. For almost four decades now, the United States has experienced high and sustained levels of unemployment. In general, since 1945 American unemployment rates have been sharply higher than those of any other industrial democracy. The only occasions when the unemployment rate has gotten even *near* to levels which other Western nations have come to regard as socially indispensible have been when we have gone to war. And even then, for Negro Americans unemployment rates have persisted at levels which any other industrial democracy would regard as obscene. Throughout this period there has never ceased to be a high level of informed and responsible comment as to how serious a problem unemployment is, and as to what may be done to eliminate it. This goal has not been an evanescent one of intellectuals: in election after election, it has proved one of the decisive forces of American politics. The fact that the Republican party became associated with unemployment in the mind of the electorate has more than any other single thing kept it almost continually out of office at the national level throughout this period. And yet the nation never got rid of unemployment during peacetime, and we may be confident that with the end of the war in Vietnam we shall have it back with us again, while in the meantime it persists as ever for the minority poor.

To repeat: Most industrial democracies would consider our national behavior in this respect to be profoundly short-sighted and potentially disastrous. Nonetheless it has proved more convenient for us to accept these short-run costs than to undergo the reforms in economic organization that a solution would entail.

The problem of unemployment is not only analogous to that of welfare, but is actually related to its recent social and intellectual history. Both the present unemployment insurance system and the welfare system (in its major components) were provisions of the Social Security Act of 1935. Both were products of the depression, and both were accompanied by the assumption that, once the economy had recovered, the need for both programs would recede as social insurance provided for the needs of the aged, of survivors, and of the temporarily unemployed. Gilbert Y. Steiner has termed this "the withering-away fallacy." Unemployment compensation would both smooth out the business cycle and enable those laid off at low points to get by in tolerable comfort – and without the onus of the dole, since it was, after all, paid-up insurance that they were getting. Similarly, once the social security coverage had settled in, the need for such noncontributory programs as Old Age Assistance and Aid to Families of Dependent Children would drop off. In each instance the assumptions have proved just correct enough to dissipate any effective social pressure for reforms that would make them correct altogether. Vast numbers of workers came to be covered by unem-

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ployment insurance, but somehow coverage eluded another group within which unemployment became chronic. Similarly, the nation is approaching universal social security coverage. In December 1966, Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance benefits were paid to 22,767,252 persons, better than one person in ten in the population. Yet a large and growing number of *other* persons are dependent on AFDC. Again it is a matter of a minority group that somehow misses out on benefits enjoyed by the great majority.

Structural reforms

Economists speak of structural unemployment, and the concept is similarly useful with respect to welfare dependency. For some time the national government has acknowledged the former and has taken, not total, but tentative steps to deal with the problem in terms of manpower retraining and the like. It is reasonable to think similar measures are in the offing with respect to structural problems in the field of welfare. But it is necessary to insist that we are no more likely to make a total effort with regard to welfare than with regard to unemployment. It may be useful here as well to draw a list of what such a total commitment would involve in order to understand, if not to accept this point.

Much, much less is known about the sources of welfare dependency than those of structural unemployment, so that any list must be tentative to the point of speculation; but, for the very reason that dependable knowledge is lacking, any serious total effort would have to take the unavoidably inefficient form of testing all probable approaches. A total effort to put an end to mass welfare dependency, then, would require something as follows:

1. An end to structural unemployment and the achievement of consistently low levels of cyclical unemployment.
2. Universal coverage for all social insurance programs, universal application of minimum wage standards, and the adoption of a nation-wide system of disability insurance such as now exists in New York and three other states. The length of unemployment compensation should be permanently extended and should provide, far better than is now the case, for workers with large families.
3. Systematic and rigid enforcement of national minimum standards of social and educational services throughout the nation, and especially in the rural South, Puerto Rico, Appalachia, Indian reservations, and the Alaskan interior.
4. A system of income supplements for workers with families, such as now exist in most parts of the world.
5. A massive dissemination of birth control knowledge and practice among low-income groups.

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6. Greatly increased levels of social service, directed particularly at the needs of female-headed households, combined with a greater willingness on the part of the state to remove children from homes deemed improper, and on the part of the community to encourage interracial adoption of children.

7. Significant diminishment in racial discrimination against Negroes, especially in the area of private housing.

8. A sharp curtailment of the freedom now by and large enjoyed by low-income groups to produce children they cannot support and, in the case of family heads, to abandon women and children they are no longer willing to live with.

Group values and group power

In the context of such a list, it is possible better to appreciate the implications of the thought that welfare dependency is a structural problem in American society. This means it is a problem with markedly different impact on different ethnic, racial, and religious groups. To resolve it will require the imposition of uniformities of behavior in a society that has vigorously resisted anything of the sort, and has done so in the name of values a great deal more important to it than the size of the welfare rolls.

These issues, moreover, involve not just group values, but group power as well. The resistance of Southern whites to improvements in social services that would benefit Negroes is commonly understood as resistance to changes that might potentially threaten white dominance of Southern society. But not dissimilar considerations exist outside the South. Thus the United States is the only industrial democracy in the world that does not have a family allowance, a system of flat grants to all parents of dependent children. This program, which might be expected to have great support among white liberals, has so far had little – and for the openly (if mistakenly) declared reason that it would encourage the poor to have children; that it would be, in common usage, a baby bonus. White liberals are in favor of birth control, which will enable the poor to have not more but fewer children. Now at one level these are entirely benevolent attitudes. But at another they amount to nothing more or less than the view that a family allowance will increase the number of Negro votes, or Puerto Rican, or whatever, while a birth control program will decrease the number of such votes. And minority group leaders are beginning to suspect as much.

Similarly, while minority group spokesmen are increasingly protesting the oppressive features of the welfare system, and liberal scholars are actively developing the concept of the constitutional rights of welfare recipients with respect to such matters as man-in-the-house searches, it is nonetheless the fact that the poor of the

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United States today enjoy a quite unprecedented de facto freedom to abandon their children in the certain knowledge that society will care for them, and, what is more, in a state such as New York, to care for them by quite decent standards. Through most of history, a man who deserted his children pretty much ensured that they would starve, or near to it, if he was not brought back and that he would be horsewhipped if he were. Much attention is paid the fact that the number of able-bodied men receiving benefits under the ADFC program is so small. In February 1966 Robert H. Mugge, of the Bureau of Family Services of HEW, reported that of 1,081,000 AFDC parents, there were but 56,000 "unemployed but employable fathers." But in addition to 110,000 incapacitated fathers, there were some 900,000 mothers, of whom far the greatest number had been divorced or deserted by their presumably able-bodied husbands. A working class or middle class American who chooses to leave his family is normally required first to go through elaborate legal proceedings and thereafter to devote much of his income to supporting them. Normally speaking, society gives him nothing. The fathers of AFDC families, however, simply disappear. Only a person invincibly prejudiced on behalf of the poor will deny that there are attractions in such freedom of movement.

It will thus be seen that welfare involves issues which American society does not readily grapple with. In Gilbert Y. Steiner's words, "public assistance introduces problems of race, of sex, of religion, and of family relationships. It is hard to think of four areas most American politicians would rather avoid."

III

The third general point about the welfare situation is that the political leaders of the nation have done just that: they have more or less consistently avoided any serious involvement with the problems of welfare. Which is not to say that welfare has been kept out of politics: on the contrary, it has become increasingly involved, but normally at the instance of minor figures seeking to make an impact on the public by charges of abuse and fraud, or by extremely conservative leaders who see in the rising welfare rolls a symbol of developments they generally disapprove of. But since the establishment of the present welfare system under the New Deal, the major national political leaders, sensing perhaps that their freedom of action was quite limited here, have only rarely allowed themselves to become involved with the subject, and in no case has any stayed with it long enough to make an impact. What they have done is to leave the matter to the professionals, and in so doing have given rise to an extraordinary chapter in the history of American professionalism.

For roughly a quarter century, from the end of the legislative

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period of the New Deal in the late 1930's to the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964, the care of the poor in the United States, to the extent at least that it involved the management and direction of the welfare system, was almost entirely in the hands of social workers, or persons whose professional careers were wholly confined to this area. Welfare was kept "out of politics." This was possible largely because of a technicality in the Social Security Act that was little noticed at the time, but which was decisive later on. *Welfare costs are a charge on the Treasury which are automatically disbursed.* Neither the President nor the Congress has any but a *pro forma* say in the matter – which made it not only possible, but almost necessary to leave matters to the administrators, and this is what happened.

So, after a moment in the sun under the New Deal, the administrative direction of the federal end of the welfare system settled fairly low down in the federal hierarchy, with a minimum of visibility, while the principal administrative activity remained in any event with the states. On the whole, Congressional interest in the program has been confined to sweetening the federal contribution to the state programs and letting matters rest at that. Presidents have pretty much gone along. At the state and local level the welfare program has been much more frequently the subject of political controversy, but these have normally turned on issues of administration. Few persons have questioned the existence of the system as such. The only near analogy would be that of the federal highway program, the funds for which are also automatically disbursed, in this case from a trust fund, and which states and municipalities accept with few arguments save as to the precise location of this or that highway. It is not mere chance that the two largest items of federal expenditure on domestic programs are highways and welfare.

Matters might have gone on peaceably enough, save that about halfway through this period the character of the welfare program began to change in somewhat inexplicable ways. There was nothing unusual about this. Such turnings are a law of life for all systems. Some are able to respond creatively; some are not. Welfare was not. That is why the present crises exist.

The AFDC explosion

What happened, of course, was that the nature of the AFDC program changed profoundly, and its size commenced growing at a wholly unexpected rate. The major thrust behind the Social Security Act had been the mounting Congressional support for an old age assistance program. Little attention was paid to the ADC provision, which was modeled directly on the widow's laws that had been enacted by the states. It was to be a sensible, low key program, in the

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oldest, indeed Biblical tradition of community responsibility. What no one thought about, because at that time Americans did not much think of such things, was that the program was perfectly adapted to providing support for the female-headed, lower class family.

In his classic study, *The Negro Family in the United States,* published in 1939, E. Franklin Frazier of Howard University forecast that, as the bankrupt system of Southern agriculture forced more and more of the rural Negro proletariat into the cities, the problem of welfare dependency of Negro families would become increasingly acute. But World War II followed and few listened. As it turned out, Frazier was perfectly correct in his forecast, and the AFDC program responded by changing, almost abruptly, from a widow's program to what in certain important respects became a Negro program.

Because this is an extremely sensitive subject, it is necessary to be explicit and somewhat detailed. Until the present moment, at least, the majority of families receiving AFDC support have been white. However, the Negro proportions have been rising steadily. A special HEW study in 1948 showed that only 29 per cent of ADC families were Negro. By 1961 the proportion had increased to 44 per cent, and accounted for *60* per cent of the increase in the total number of AFDC families from 449,154 to 921,102. Because Negro families were larger, 1,112,106 or almost half the children supported by the program in 1961 were Negro, as against 1,165,308 whites. Moreover, 72 per cent of white children receiving AFDC support in 1961 were living in rural nonfarm areas, whereas 75 per cent of the Negro children were living in central cities.

It must be insisted that these proportions are functions of class far more than of race. In 1964, for example, in New York State, Puerto Ricans who comprised an estimated 4.53 per cent of the population accounted for an average of 26.5 per cent of AFDC recipients – rather more than five times their proportion. Negroes, on the other hand, with an estimated 10.19 per cent of the population, accounted for 46.1 per cent of AFDC recipients – rather less than five times their proportion. However, Americans are accustomed to thinking in categories of race, rather than class, and the AFDC program began to acquire this cast. Just as importantly, the nature of the families changed. In 1940, in the nation as a whole, 42 per cent of the fathers of AFDC children were dead. By 1963 this proportion had declined to 6 per cent. A good two-thirds of the children were, for practical purposes, simply abandoned. Again, this was a characteristic of lower class *urban* families, with perhaps some reinforcement from Negro family patterns that had developed in the South. Moreover, the growth in Negro population in Northern states occurred at a period when, despite strong popular convictions to the contrary, the "stability" of white families in the nation was if anything improving, as can be seen from Table 1.

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TABLE 1. *New York State Status of Father with Respect to ADC Families, November 1953 and November 1961*

	NOVEMBER 1953	NOVEMBER 1961
Status of Father, White Families		
Total	23,000	25,000
Dead	3,358	1,325
Incapacitated	4,071	4,825
Legally separated or divorced	1,840	2,075
Deserting or separated w/o court decree	6,808	6,825
Not married to mother	4,945	2,875
Unemployed	—	5,275
Other status	1,978	1,800
Status of Father, Nonwhite Families		
Total	21,600	58,200
Dead	1,123	2,328
Incapacitated	1,145	5,413
Legally separated or divorced	518	2,503
Deserting or separated w/o court decree	7,001	15,947
Not married to mother	10,798	22,465
Unemployed	—	5,354
Other status	1,015	4,190

Source: Trends in the AID to Dependent Children Program, New York State Department of Social Welfare, Office of Social Research and Statistics, Special Research and Statistical Reports, No. 28, January 1964, mimeographed.

Note: "White" families do not include Puerto Rican families.

Thus, between 1953 and 1961 the number of white AFDC families in which the father was not married to the mother dropped sharply, and the slight increase in the total number of AFDC white families was more than accounted for by the addition (in 1961) of the AFDC-U category, which made families with unemployed parents eligible for assistance. During this period the number of nonwhite families on AFDC more than doubled and much of the increase came from the fatherless family segment, which itself more than doubled, whereas the nonwhite AFDC-U group was just level with the white counterpart.

As of January 1967, a full third of the West Virginia families receiving AFDC support were involved with the unemployed partner segment (AFDC-U) in which both parents are normally at home. But in New York State at that time, only 8.4 per cent of the families were AFDC-U. In 1964 in New York, Negro recipients made up 46.1 per cent of the regular AFDC program, but only 26.5 per cent of the AFDC-U segment. The proportions for whites were almost exactly reversed: 27.4 per cent of the AFDC and 47 per cent of the AFDC-U. Puerto Ricans were 26 per cent of each.

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Probably this development was at least in part due to a rise in illegitimacy. Between 1940 and 1965 the estimated *rate* of illegitimate births (per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15–44) rose from 7.1 to 23.4 for the nation as a whole. For whites the increase was from 3.6 to 11.6. For nonwhites it was from 35.6 to 97.7. The estimated illegitimacy *ratio* (per 1,000 births) rose from 19.5 to 39.6 for whites, and from 168.3 to 263.2 for nonwhites. In the Central Harlem district the ratio in 1965 was 465, an increase from 324 in 1955. Only a minority of illegitimate children receive public assistance, and they are a distinct minority of AFDC children. (In 1965 the Department of Social Welfare reported that "an estimated 35 per cent of the children on ADC in New York State have been born out-of-wedlock.") However, there was an increasing number of such children, and they must have had an impact on the welfare program.

In short: from being a program designed to aid unfortunate *individuals,* AFDC gradually turned into a subsistence program for both individuals and for a *class.* Robert Mugge has calculated that for youths reaching eighteen in 1963 approximately one white child in ten, and *six* nonwhite children in ten, had at some point in their life been supported by AFDC.

The great silence

This silent transformation is the essential fact behind the present crises in welfare. The public is beginning to see it as a crisis in public expenditure. Social scientists are beginning to see it as a crisis in social structure: the development of a permanently dependent class. And the members of that class are beginning to see in the inadequacies of the system the source of their dependency, to the point that an even greater crisis must be created in order to force the larger society to change the system.

A principal reason that these crises have crept into being is that somewhere along the line the social welfare professionals decided, in effect, to say nothing about them. In effect, to cover up. This was in some respects a consequence of the political climate of the times. The period 1946–1960, when this transformation occurred, was one of conservatism and worse in American domestic politics. ("Worse" in the sense of an unwillingness to experiment with social programs on behalf of the poor.) But it has also to do with the nature of the role of nonpolitical professionals in government.

The ADC program began with the least controversial of objectives: to aid the children of widows. In the compassionate 1930's an especially appealing gloss was added: one learns that the administrators liked to think of the typical recipient as a West Virginia mother whose husband had died in a mine accident. Honest, hard-working, God-fearing White Protestant folk. Rural. Gradually the

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typical recipient became an urban Negro or a member of some other minority group, the source of whose dependency the larger society not infrequently classified as grossly immoral conduct. It was unlikely in the extreme that the Congress would ever have enacted a program *de novo* to serve such a clientele, and even less likely that it would be moved to improve the program if greater attention were drawn to its new dimension. Lee Rainwater has suggested that, finding they could do little to improve the conditions of the welfare population, the social welfare professional opted instead to protect its good name. In the abstract this was a generous enough decision, but in practice it developed habits of mind and patterns of conduct that were – and are – ominously close to dishonest. There were honorable exceptions. The American Public Welfare Association sponsored the powerful study of the AFDC program by M. Elaine Burgess and Daniel O. Price, "An American Dependency Challenge," published in 1963, and various individuals sought to communicate the horror of welfare reality. But, in general, the decision to protect the good name of the clients tended to strengthen the very forces opposed to social change. A circular process took effect: despairing of the public being willing to improve matters if it were told the truth, the professionals opted more or less to conceal the truth, which left the public with the impression that matters were not particularly in need of improvement.[1]

[1] A personal note may be in order. In the early 1960's, while in the United States Department of Labor, I became interested in the impact of employment conditions on welfare. By comparatively simple calculations, I was able to show that, during the 1950's, there were quite astonishingly strong correlations between nonwhite male unemployment rates and such phenomena as the number of new AFDC cases opened and the number of nonwhite married women separated from their husbands, *but* that with the onset of the 1960's, these relations seemed to disappear, so that, for example, the unemployment rate would decline but the number of new AFDC cases would rise. These were no more than correlations, but they had not, to my knowledge, been done before and the implications of the apparent weakening influence of aggregate economic movements on social conditions are surely interesting and possibly of considerable importance. I included portions of these data in a policy paper prepared for internal government use, and in signed articles that appeared in *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and *The Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. One would imagine that a hypothesis of this kind would arouse interest and bring about serious efforts either to confirm or disprove it. Nothing of the sort occurred. A storm of controversy arose over the government report, but I have seen but one citation, by a sociologist, of the changing employment-welfare relationship hypothesis, and have had no comment whatever from the social welfare profession.

Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey have noted that "the welfare establishment's policy of trying to be 'color-blind' " required that there be no regular breakdown of AFDC rates by race. "What kind of 'good public relations' logic justifies such a policy?" they ask. None does, but the policy persists because the persons who established it are still running the programs, and will continue to do so. This was why, for example, the poverty program could not possibly have been entrusted to the Welfare Administration (much less the Children's Bureau!). An entirely new organization had to be established. This is a familiar situation in American government: one of the unanticipated complications of civil service reform.

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The heart of the matter is as follows: Developments in the 1950's would have made it apparent to anyone closely involved that, despite burgeoning prosperity, patterns of income, employment, housing, discrimination, and social services – *very possibly including the welfare system itself* – were somehow undermining stability of family life among the poor, particularly the urban Negro poor. There was, moreover, growing evidence that the more prestigious forms of casework and counseling had relatively little effect on the clients, however much they enhanced the status of the counselors.

The social work professionals, the inner circle of whom had continued access to the political leaders of the nation, could have developed and presented this information and pleaded for consideration of its implications. They did not. That is all there is to say: they didn't do it. Their clearest opportunity came at the outset of the Kennedy years, when the national enthusiasm for new ideas and new challenges was once again at a peak, but they made little of their opportunity. It was a period of task forces galore, and a variety were assembled to develop what became the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962, the first comprehensive change in the federal system since it had been established. But the key conception of the amendments was the need to provide increased professional services to the poor in order to restore their ability to support themselves: *ergo,* first train more social workers. It is a system known as feeding the sparrows by feeding the horses. Hailed at the time as historical changes, in retrospect the 1962 amendments simply confirmed all the major tendencies in a system which, five years later, the Commissioner of Welfare in New York City, former Associate Dean of the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University, was to declare "bankrupt."

IV

The fourth general point about the welfare situation is that the period of nonpolitical professional direction appears to be coming to an end. Welfare is becoming politicized. The events of 1967 in the House of Representatives settled that.

The reasons for this are various, although convergent. A principal one is that the transformation of the program and its increasing size is becoming a matter of wider public knowledge and concern. Here and there in the nation more conservative political leaders have been able to exploit the issue with some success. Terms such as "welfare mothers" and demands for residency requirements have emerged as effective forms in which to exploit anti-Negro sentiment among voters to whom raw racism would appear vulgar, even immoral. Newburgh, New York, has become a symbol for such efforts, dating from the events of 1961, when the city manager, Joseph Mitchell, undertook to remove able-bodied males from the relief rolls and generally to

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impose strict moral sanctions on all the recipients of welfare.

Negro and other minority groups have found it difficult to respond to these attacks. The dilemma of the Negro groups is clear enough, and would perhaps be less painful and paralyzing if it were better understood and more readily acknowledged. It is this:

From one point of view the conditions of family life among the Negro lower class constitute the strongest possible indictment of the social conditions that have been imposed upon that class by the larger American society. The fact that a large group of persons is reduced to such conditions declares that the system under which they live is unjust. Period.

But from another point of view the conditions of family life among the lower class poor constitute ammunition for the charge that the people involved are worthless, are responsible for their own plight, and should expect nothing from society save ostracism and perhaps punishment. When directed against Negroes, this attitude may be based on nothing more than race prejudice. But it would be greatly mistaken to suppose that it is derived solely or even largely from racial considerations. Ironically it is every bit as likely to be associated with religious or moral convictions as is the very opposite view. In the United States, a conspicuous streak of this kind of thinking is to be found among a certain type of Catholic, preoccupied with problems of contraception and dirty magazines to a point perhaps injurious to spiritual life. But the central tradition is that of Protestant fundamentalism, and most especially *Southern* Protestant fundamentalism. It is necessary to consider whether Negro Americans, being themselves permeated with this tradition, find it particularly excruciating to deal with the subject of disorganized family life for the very reason that their own religious inheritance is so remorselessly unforgiving of it. In truth, the inheritance of slavery – certainly a hateful thing for Negro Americans to consider – may be a relatively minor consideration in this matter when compared with the inheritance of Bible Belt Fundamentalism. This inheritance is, of course, especially marked among the Negro leadership groups, who by and large come from long-established Southern families whose domestic standards appear to have been as rigid as anything a hard shell Baptist could hope for, and indeed a rebuke to their neighbors, white and black.

Yet another convolution must be explored. Family morality or, specifically, sexual morality is such an obsession among religious conservatives in the United States that those who are in rebellion against religious conservatism tend to lump the two together. As it happens, it is just such persons, notably liberal white ministers, who have provided much leadership and support for civil rights activities. These activists and militants have been especially active in national church organizations, and by and large have resisted any examination of family problems among the poor as both an insult to a class of

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persons already sufficiently stigmatized and as a concession to the very forces of conservative religiosity which, in truth, in the South, are very much part of the racist coalition.

In general, many persons active in the civil rights movements, as in most social reform efforts in recent American history, bring to the undertaking a considerable disenchantment with the traditional "middle class" values of the society. Although they are likely to be – or because they are – the products of quite successful families, ideas of family stability and morality tend to be seen by such persons as part of the bourgeois *apparat.* And they say to hell with it. Thus, a recent article on Harlem in *The Urban Review,* published by the Center for Urban Education in New York City, spoke with scorn of "Victorian notions about broken homes." Somehow or other, the idea that sexual repression is bad has gotten mixed up with the idea that illegitimacy, or whatever, is good. In a curious way the more liberated youth of the present seem to be afflicted by a culture lag of sorts: The newest and best thinking about such matter is considerably more respectful of the "nuclear family" than they seem to know. Or care to know.

The militants

Minority group spokesmen, when the subject is raised, tend to respond with arguments about their group values being different from those of the larger society, which is a way of saying "Let's not talk about it." Which in effect declares "Let's not do anything about it." The response is perfectly human, but not much help save to a policy of *laissez-faire.* Nevertheless, despite an occasional reference in NAACP literature to the fact that in the South welfare laws require families to break up in order to receive assistance, in the main the established Negro organizations, and the only now emerging organizations of Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, have been silent and essentially obstructionist about the subject. This of course can change, but to the present moment welfare has been a subject that civil rights leaders have chosen to ignore for the essential fact that to confront it would seem to give ammunition to their worst enemies.

Not surprisingly then, the issue has been raised by militant civil rights activists who (regardless of their own color) are in revolt, not only against white American society, but also against the established Negro leaders whom they regard as mere appendixes of the larger system. Greatly stimulated by the federal government's poverty program, with its emphasis on organizing the poor and its frequently avowed contempt for "social workers," these militants are seeking to transform welfare recipients into a powerful interest group that will no longer be forced to accept whatever bargain the welfare establishment could strike with the larger society, but rather will themselves

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become a party to the negotiations. A Poverty/Rights Action Center has been established in Washington headed by a former Assistant National Director of CORE. Demonstrations have become frequent, and have sometimes gotten out of hand. The welfare office sit-in by Mothers for Adequate Welfare in Boston led to four days of rioting in a city that had hitherto been without racial violence. As is not uncommonly the case, the rhetoric of such organizations is combative, and the principal target for abuse is the welfare department, personified by the welfare worker herself. Three generations of professional work on behalf of the poor have ended with the professional worker being labeled the enemy – by the poor.

The aims of these groups are as yet indeterminate and not without a measure of inconsistency. Many of those involved seek nothing more than to improve the situation of welfare recipients, responding to the conviction that the existing system inculcates and perpetuates precisely the dependency that it nominally seeks to overcome. This is an essentially conservative goal, comparable in many ways to that of traditional trade unionism. (And, of course, as likely as not to be seen as radical and threatening by more comfortable parties.) Notable among the intellectual progenitors of the movement is Professor Richard A. Cloward of the Columbia School of Social Work, the prominant social theorist who contributed much to the conception of the Mobilization for Youth program on the lower east side of New York. Cloward proposes a "strategy for crisis" based on the proposition that twice as many persons are eligible for welfare benefits as those who actually receive them and that by organizing the poor to demand their rightful benefits a crisis can be induced in state and local government revenues of such magnitude as to force the national government to guarantee an annual income. It should be noted, however, that while Cloward's objective – the inclusion of the poor in the larger, affluent society – is conservative, his strategy is readily adapted to the desires of many in the penumbra of the welfare movement who would wish such a crisis to bring down the whole system in that apocalyptic and purifying ruin so beloved of radical eschatology.

Dr. Cloward is a professor. Dr. Wiley, the head of the Poverty/Rights Action Center, is a former professor. The New Left students who helped found the M.A.W. are, in considerable number, future professors.[2] There is as yet no great evidence that the welfare population has accepted their message. But the very notion that there is a welfare population – and the spectacle of the riot-torn streets of the American cities where, by and large, it lives – suggests that welfare will become an increasingly prominent political issue in the years ahead. And an ugly one. A most powerful member of the United States Senate, the man in charge of the legislation involved, openly refers

[2] The writer is a professor.

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to the Poverty/Rights mothers as "Black Brood Mares, Inc.," and in truth their tactics have invited such racial slurs.

V

The *fifth* and final general point is that, by and large, the proposals now being made for improving the welfare system would, in the first instance at the very least, have the effect of enlarging it rather than utterly transforming it.

The features of the existing system that are most objected to (and indeed are most objectionable) arise from what is almost a conflict of interest on the part of welfare agencies: they want to help their clients, but they must also strive to keep costs down. There is the added internal conflict that, within the human species, dependency evokes disdain. "Cold as charity" is the old and accurate description. Nowhere more than in New York State has social welfare been more imbued with compassion and understanding derived from religious and professional convictions. That the New York welfare system is under attack from militants probably reflects in large part the common-sense judgment that friends are easier targets than enemies. However, the mutual tension and dislike between those who give and those who receive exists even in New York, and there is probably no complete cure for it.

Two general approaches to this dilemma have been suggested, and deserve close attention. The first is an administrative approach which seeks to eliminate the complexities and built-in tensions of the present system, involving as it does cost sharing by three levels of government in a literal maze of programs defined by category, i.e., blindness, disability, and widowhood. The Advisory Council on Public Welfare, in its June 1966 report to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, proposed that these be scrapped and replaced by "A Nationwide Comprehensive Program of Public Assistance Based upon a Single Criterion: Need." Government would ask not *why,* but simply *whether* a person needed assistance, and then provide it in a context of national minimum levels. This would eliminate much confusion, and dickering – but also, the Council makes clear, it would increase the number of persons receiving public assistance. The Council estimated that only one-fifth of those families with annual incomes under $3,000 were being helped by public assistance and that many more would be if a single-criterion system took effect.

In another vein, a number of legal scholars and social scientists have proposed that the harassment and humiliation of welfare recipients will never end until welfare is established as a *right,* a new form of property that entitles the individual to receive benefits quite apart from his meekness, moral worth, or lack thereof. In order to achieve this, there should be a guarantee of counsel in relations be-

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tween the recipient and the welfare agency, and a heightened concern by all involved for the constitutional rights of recipients in such matters as unannounced visits, without benefit of search warrant, to determine if welfare mothers are cohabiting without benefit of clergy. Again it may be noted that these are proposals that in the instance will tend to increase the number of persons on welfare. It should also be noted that they may also serve to lower the public's acceptance of the program. Social work professionals and bureaucrats assuredly have their limitations, but it is as near to certain as social science can be that they are considerably more permissive, broad-minded, and tolerant than the public at large. The strategy of politicizing the welfare issue is risky, indeed. It could easily serve to divide rather than unify American society, and would do so along just those lines of race and ethnicity that it has been the genius of politics in New York to keep blurred.

On the other hand, in a state such as New York welfare has every reason, as it were, to become a political issue in that it profoundly affects the distribution of power and wealth among groups in the society. *The true issue about welfare is not what it costs the taxpayers, but what it costs the recipients.* Evidence – as usual – is practically nonexistent, but the probability is strong that the present welfare system is serving to maintain the poorest groups in society in a position of impotent fury. Impotent because the system destroys the potential of individuals and families to improve themselves. Fury because it claims to do otherwise.

VI

The new militancy is likely to have some effect, and the number of welfare recipients will be affected accordingly. It is at least possible that part of the recent rise in AFDC rates has reflected not so much a change in the size of the eligible population – no one has the foggiest idea what that size might be – but rather an increased willingness and ability on the part of eligible persons to claim what are indeed their rights. It may be assumed that this process will continue. But the larger question for public policy is, of course, how to set in motion forces that will gradually diminish the size of the population that *needs* public assistance. For some special groups – the blind, the aged, the disabled – there is likely always to be a measure of need, and this will no doubt grow somewhat with the population. But these groups are not now, and are never likely to be, either a threat to social stability or a serious charge on public resources. Indeed, in the case of the blind and the disabled it is reasonably clear that investment of public resources brings ample returns, with benefits all around. *The heart of the problem is dependent children from broken families.* The swelling number of such children must be re-

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versed if we are not to create out of our very affluence the "under class" of which Gunnar Myrdal has warned.

And the first point to be made is that we do not know how. This is in part the price of progress: knowledge has not kept pace with change for the simple reason that change has been so rapid and in many respects radical. But it is also the legacy of the generation of professionalism during which the changing nature of the problems faced, and the apparent inefficacy of earlier solutions, was by and large kept secret. We simply do not know the answers to most of the basic questions as to what forces people into dependency and what liberates them from it. All that can be said is that, in a short period of time, we have at least brought that all-important fact out into the open.

One further point has also become clear. A high level of welfare dependency appears to have become a *normal* function of American society. What is more, if normal social functioning will not solve the problem, then it is required that the notion of what is normal be redefined. In a word, what is required is social change. Unhappily, this brings on the question of theory. What works?

In the main, efforts to bring about social change on behalf of the American poor, and especially the Negro poor, have been dominated by two theories, that of legal action and that of services. The former obviously is a theory widely held by lawyers. "In this theory," James S. Coleman writes, "the arena of social action is the court, and any advocate of social change implements his advocacy by obtaining court rulings." The movement to establish the rights of welfare recipients and to provide them legal counsel is derived from this theory. Coleman argues that the evidence on the theory is quite mixed, and from his analysis it would appear particularly difficult to apply to a highly decentralized system such as those under which education and welfare are administered.

The second theory is that of services – providing advice, counsel, and assistance to needy persons to enable them to function better. This has been a dominant theme in social welfare practice and, as Lee Rainwater argues, the "principal thrust" of the community action programs of the federal anti-poverty program, designed as they are "toward restructuring communities to make life more tolerable for poor people."

Clearly neither of these theories is without value, and efforts to implement them must continue, but by themselves they appear to be inadequate to the present task. What is needed now is a strategy of *income equalization.* The point Rainwater and others continually make, and which events continue to confirm, is that the problem of the poor is that they are excluded from the larger society because they do not have the income needed to sustain an "average" life. As

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a result we have built up a dual system under which the goods and services – from food stuffs to marriage counseling – which most persons purchase in the market place are provided the welfare population by the government. The poor get their victuals from a massive company store, and it may be doubted how much the essence of things will be changed by transforming it into a supermarket. There will be no end of this until the incomes of the poor are brought up to average levels. American income distribution for the past several decades has resembled an elongated diamond – widest in the middle ranges, but reaching both far above and below the average. Rainwater proposes a triangle-shaped distribution in which great heights may be reached, but with no one below the base. He is right.

The family allowance

It might be imagined that the goal of full employment would be much more politically feasible than that of income redistribution, but it may prove just the opposite. The reason for this is that full employment requires structural changes in the economy – in the society – that impinge on a whole range of great and petty sovereignties, and in truth it may prove easier to redistribute money than power. In any event discussion of the problem of income maintenance is at a new high in the nation, with the not unimportant by-product that the rigors of economics have been brought to bear on the sometimes all-too-fuzzy world of social welfare. Proposals abound, most of them associated with the idea of providing a national minimum income for all. The attractions of such programs are considerable, but it must be said that so also is their cost. If they have one crucial failing, however, it relates to the present political climate of the nation, rather than to any intrinsic defect. The Negative Income Tax, and similar arrangements, would divide the nation between those who receive the benefit and those who pay for it. In the present state of race relations, and the mounting radicalism of both the left and the right, it may be argued that what is needed is a program that will benefit everyone, rather than just a few, thereby asserting the unities of the nation, rather than emphasizing those qualities that divide it. For this purpose the family allowance would seem an ideal solution, and particularly so for those concerned with problems of social welfare.

The United States is the only industrial democracy in the world that does not have a family allowance. We are also the only one with anything like the welfare population in our cities today. The relationship is not a direct one, surely, but neither is it for certain non-existent. As encountered throughout the world, family allowances are, as James C. Vadakin explains, a system for redistributing income in such a way as to benefit the child-rearing portion of a nation's population. They respond to an essential fact of an industrial society

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which Sir William Beveridge described in his famous report to wartime Britain:

> Social insurance should be part of a policy of a national minimum. But a national minimum for families of every size cannot in practice be secured by a wage system, which must be based on the product of a man's labour and not on the size of his family.

The advantages of a family allowance are many. It is paid automatically, requiring no means test, nor a great bureaucracy. (The cost of delivery could probably be kept within one cent and two cents on the dollar.) It is provided not for adults, but for children, in response to the one fact that any group can be brought to agree on, namely that kids cost money. The principal disadvantage of the family allowance is that a large portion of the payments would go to families that are not now defined as poor. But this is also an advantage! The greatest number of these families are working class or lower middle class people, earning incomes in the $5,000 to $8,000 range. This is the group that by and large has been left out of the recent spate of government programs: if not forgotten, it is at least ignored. We have established a Job Corps for the drop-out, and a Peace Corps for the college graduate, but the plain fellow with a high school diploma, and his parents, have little to show from either the New Frontier or the Great Society. This – majority – group of Americans cannot but wonder what it is getting out of all the activity, and in particular has to be asking whether the government is playing favorites, or greasing squeaky wheels, or whatever. This is especially so because this group is anything but affluent. These are families that know where every half dollar goes. In March 1967 the spendable average weekly earnings of workers *with no dependents* on private nonagricultural payrolls were $81.37. The spendable earnings for workers *with three dependents* were $88.75. On a fifty-two-week basis this would mean spendable incomes of $4,231 and $4,615 respectively. In other words, a man with a wife and two children will on average bring home only $7.38 a week more than the bachelor working alongside him. Just as importantly, the average industrial wage in the United States today does not provide even half the income necessary to meet the City Worker's Family Budget as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In Fall 1966 this budget, providing a moderate standard of living for an urban family of four, came to $9,200, in the nation generally, and was over $10,000 in such cities as New York and Boston.

Obviously, the worker with a large family is at a special disadvantage, and in the United States today this tends to mean the workers at the lower end of the wage scale. Dependency ratios, defined as the number of children under age eighteen per 1,000 adult males aged twenty-one to sixty-four, are significantly higher for Negroes than for whites, and *are becoming more so.*

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TABLE 2.

	DEPENDENCY RATIO (CHILDREN UNDER 18 PER 1,000 ADULT MALES)	
	1960	1966
White	1,365	1,406
Negroes	1,922	2,216

Between 1960 and 1966 the white ratio rose only 3 per cent, while the Negro ratio increased 11 per cent. Over the six-year period, the adult males (ages twenty-one to sixty-four) increased by 5.4 per cent among both whites and Negroes, but the child population under eighteen expanded two and a half times as rapidly among Negroes (21.6 per cent) as among whites (8.6 per cent).[3]

The family allowance system in Canada currently provides $6 a month for each child under age ten, and $8 for those aged ten through fifteen. An American equivalent might be the payment of $8 for those under six and $12 for those between six and seventeen. For an average worker in private industry with two teenage children, it would increase the "family increment" in his annual take-home pay from $384 to $672, and for one with four such children, to $960 (there being no reason to believe workers with larger families have any larger incomes, and indeed clear evidence that they tend to have less). Families with much larger incomes would, of course, receive a family allowance, but they would pay much of it back in income taxes. Such a system in the United States would cost in the neighborhood of $9 billion a year. In this context, let it be noted that as of 1964 the United States devoted the lowest percentage of Gross National Product to social welfare measures of any of the Western democracies: 7.0 per cent as contrasted with 17.0 per cent in West Germany, which has the highest proportion.

A sequence of assumptions

With respect to welfare problems, a family allowance would involve a sequence of assumptions. First, that a small increase in income would have an important increase in the financial "solvency" of low income families of the kind that now break up in large numbers, and would do so especially at the point where children are beginning to make serious demands on family budgets. This is no more than a bet, but it is not a foolish one. It must be remembered that the United States now has a family allowance for *broken families* and that it is widely argued (although typically there are not five cents worth of research findings on the subject) that the availability of AFDC payments does lead to family break up.

[3] Source: Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Data for 1960 and 1966 are not strictly comparable, and are subject to revision owing to errors in estimates of nonwhite population.

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Moreover, a careful economic analysis might very well demonstate that the present welfare system is indeed, as Duncan M. MacIntyre has argued, a kind of latter day Speenhamland system under which society supplements the wages of a particularly depressed group doing the dirty work that the rest of the population would as soon avoid. This is a matter of particular concern to New York City, where average weekly earnings in manufacturing have been dropping further and further behind the national average, and, where, perhaps significantly, the increase in the number of persons on Home Relief, i.e., intact families with an employed father whose income supply does not meet family needs, appears to have been rising faster than that of the AFDC program. Among some groups in New York City, it is fairly clear that these wage levels have forced married women into the work force, with resultant strains on family life. In a study of delinquency and narcotic use among Puerto Ricans in the city, Edward Preble observes that "Probably the most significant social factor affecting the Puerto Rican family in New York is the down-grading of the Puerto Rican male." This comes about in the first instance through the changed position of the working wife, with, among other things, a sharp drop-off in the supervision of children.

The second bet would be that a family allowance would not increase the birth rates of the poorer section of the population. There is no evidence that it would. During the past two decades, for example, the Canadian and the American birth rates have risen and fallen together, with apparently no "family allowance" effect whatsoever. On the other hand, there might be— and among middle class persons there is a fixed conviction that there would be. The latter is probably the single most serious obstacle to achieving a family allowance, and is itself a commentary of sorts on our existing social dilemmas: persons who would never dream of having another baby in order to get hold of an additional $8 or $12 a month, instantly conclude that, out of depravity, cupidity, ignorance or whatever, the poor would automatically do so.

At all events, it may be said that, accompanied in particular by serious efforts to attain higher levels of employment for male family heads, a family allowance has the makings of sane social policy in a world where nothing ever is certain. Excepting, as James M. Tobin argues, that the continuation of the present AFDC program by itself is social *in*sanity.

Two other significant measures appear to be in the realm of practicable possibility for the near future: the establishment of national standards for welfare payments under the Social Security Act, and the beginning of serious research efforts to try to find out what is going on.

The case for national standards in welfare assistance is in ways a close one, although given the recent trends in welfare dependency

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it is at least possible that the Congressional delegations of the industrial states outside the South will organize themselves to bring about some change. The essential facts are two. First, that a large proportion of the poorest people in the nation are located in states whose welfare payments are miserable to the point of being punitive, with the result that the children dependent on them certainly suffer and very possibly are hurt in lasting ways. Second, the differential in payments between jurisdictions, however, *has* to encourage *some* migration toward urban centers in the North. Thus as of December 1966 New York State paid AFDC families an average of $226.85 a month. South Carolina paid $62.10. Between 1961 and 1965, the number of AFDC recipients in New York State increased 104 per cent to a rate of 69 per 1,000 children under eighteen. In South Carolina the number of recipients *decreased* by 26 per cent, to a rate of 22 per 1,000 children under eighteen. There is no solid evidence that migration had anything to do with these changes, but the possibility is surely strong, and it is absurd to suppose that a one-year residence restriction would discourage such obviously rational moves. From the point of view of the migrants, the move from South Carolina to New York is bound to be a good thing, and it would be wrong, from that point of view, to improve matters in South Carolina to the point that more persons would stay there. On the other hand, not to do so is to leave those who do remain to the mercies of an indifferent or hostile majority. It is a dilemma not easily resolved.

Puerto Rican migrants are in a fundamentally different situation from that of Southern Negroes: it is only when they leave their homeland and come to New York that they encounter discrimination and a dominant majority made up of persons of different ethnic origin. Thus, there would be no reason save economic ones to encourage migration, and good reasons to raise Puerto Rican standards even if that should have the effect of discouraging it. In any event, welfare standards appear to have little influence on events. In a recent study of Puerto Rican families in Greater San Juan and New York, Oscar Lewis found that "Higher welfare payments in New York did not appear to be an important factor in migration," and noted that while both in New York and Puerto Rico 20 per cent of the families in his sample received some form of relief payments, "Most of the families that had been on welfare in Puerto Rico were self-supporting in New York."

In the matter of research, two general areas cry out for support. In the first instance there is a need for sustained, longitudinal studies of poverty populations to try to determine which factors lead into welfare dependency, and which lead out. The need, as Paul Appleby would say, is for someone to make a mesh of things: to find just what are the interconnections of employment, family budgets, children, sex, housing, education, and all the myriad of forces impinging on

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life that sustain some persons and fail others. (An elemental question: is it a good or bad thing for AFDC mothers to go to work? In what circumstances? No one knows. Many prescribe.)

In the second instance, after three generations of professional casework, it is time we learned how genuinely to give help to those deepest in poverty. It is the judgment of such researchers as Oscar Lewis and Jane C. Kronick that there are vast numbers of families caught up in poverty who *cannot* get out by themselves and need intensive help. Oscar Lewis talks in terms of providing one caseworker for every two such (extended) families and carrying on for a decade each. In New York City, which has a turnover of caseworkers of 40 per cent a year, the implications of Lewis' judgments are unnerving, but the source commands attention and respect. In any case, the argument for research is compelling. Our existing social science cannot explain what is going on. We must learn more. It is as obvious as that, but as this paper has tried to suggest, it is not to be supposed that we will do what is obvious. More today, perhaps, than ever, the truth about the welfare problem is likely to be envisioned as threatening by those who are in a position to block any serious efforts to find it out. This need not be a crude affair: indeed, probably the very best way to ensure that no significant research is done is to pound millions of dollars of research funds down the various holes into which appropriations have been disappearing for years. This is so elemental a fact that nothing more can be said about it save this: the welfare profession cannot at this point be relied on to ensure the quality of intellect brought to bear on this issue. It is a matter that must become the direct concern of elected officials and the more central academic disciplines.

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On the "economic basis" of American politics

PETER F. DRUCKER

Why is there not one single American among the "great economists"? From its earliest days this country has had more economists than any other country. It has led in the development of the tools of economic analysis. Economists are everywhere – in government, in business, in the universities, in the labor unions. In no other country, indeed, is a knowledge of economics considered part of ordinary education; in the United States, however, we have for many years been trying to combat "economic illiteracy" in the secondary schools. And certainly there is no country in which popular interest in economics is greater, and in which economic issues are more prominent.

Yet we conspicuously lack the Great Economist, the economist who changes our ideas about economics and gives us new approaches to the interpretation and direction of economic events.

Or, rather: the great economists America has produced are not known as such, are not recognized as such. Alexander Hamilton and Henry Clay certainly deserve being considered very great economists: Hamilton, at the very dawn of systematic economics, created a basic theory of economic development which has not been much improved since; Henry Clay's "American System" is the font and origin of all welfare economics. Yet their very names are rarely mentioned in histories of economic thought, whereas the German Friedrich List, who repeated what Clay had taught him, usually occupies a prominent place in these books.

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Of course, neither Hamilton nor Clay really wanted to be known as an economist. Their own ambitions were elsewhere: Hamilton on becoming the Commanding General of a victorious United States Army, Clay on being elected President. To both men, their economics were totally incidental to their politics, and a tool thereof. For both Hamilton and Clay, economic policy was clearly a means to a political end. And when their economic views are discussed, they are correctly treated as part of their political theories and political strategies.

The explanation for this state of affairs would seem to be this: Economics is too important to American politics to be left to the American economist. Economics has a political role to fulfill that transcends its own subject matter. For well over two hundred years it has been the unifying impulse in this country's political process. Since colonial days, "economic interests" have been used systematically to create political forces and political alignments, and above all to unite regional and sectional groups behind one leader and one program. The names of these economic interests have changed; but whether we speak of the "manufacturing interest," the "farming interest," or the "silver bloc," the idea itself has not changed. Similarly, for well over two centuries, economic issues – such as the tariff, the currency, or free soil – have been used to overcome and neutralize ideological cleavages and conflicts that otherwise might have torn apart the nation. During all of our history, fundamental rifts in the country have been bridged by polarizing politics on economic issues; these are issues on which a compromise, distributing dollars and cents, is always possible. The classical example is, of course, the compromise over the "Tariff of Abomination" between the South and Andrew Jackson that postponed the conflict over slavery for thirty years. All along it has been good American political manners to talk dollars and cents when we really mean political decisions. The way in which Robert McNamara, as Secretary of Defense in both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, used budgetary control radically to alter strategic concepts and military organization is another good example.

Perhaps most revealing is the way in which we have used the economic sphere to think through and work out basic issues of the relation of government to society. Big business is far more powerful in France or Germany, for instance, than it is in the United States. But only in the United States has the relationship between "government and business" come to be considered the key issue for a fundamental discussion of the role and power of government in society. Indeed, our public discussions for a century now have led many a naïve foreign observer to conclude that in the United States there are no noteworthy social institutions other than business institutions.

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The great themes of American history

The result of this peculiar role of economic issues and economic controversy in the American political process is most paradoxical. On the one hand, economics in this country appears to be far more prominent and far more important in the political life than in any other country. American history seems to be dominated, at first sight, by economic conflict. Indeed it is possible to overlook the fact that the great themes of American history have all along been moral and constitutional: slavery, the industrial versus the agrarian society, and federalism in the nineteenth century; racial equality, the role and function of the central government, and America's place in an international society in this century. In sharp contrast to countries whose politics have an ideological organization and pattern, such as all European countries, these great themes are barely mentioned in day-to-day, year-to-year American politics, where the slogans are primarily economic. It is, therefore, only too easy to mistake the appearance for reality. It is thus possible to argue, as a whole school of historians did, that the Civil War was an "unnecessary conflict" and could have been avoided by paying a few hundred million dollars to the slave owners. It is possible, as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., did in his brilliant *Age of Jackson,* to overlook completely that the central theme and the crowning achievement of the Jackson administration was to establish the sovereignty of the national government over all regional or sectional interests; instead, Mr. Schlesinger made economic and class interests paramount. It is even possible, as Charles Beard did in a long life as a historian, to see the whole of our history as determined by, and subordinated to, economic interest. But Beard lived long enough to find out that any attempt to predict the course of American history and American political behavior from economics is bound to misfire.

Every American politician must indeed know how to use economic measures for political ends. If he aspires to a national role, he must be a master of finding and creating economic alignments that unify diverse groups across the nation. Even John C. Calhoun, the most nearly "metaphysical" of our political thinkers, spent the last two decades of his life in an abortive attempt to bridge the moral gulf of slavery between South and West by means of their common economic interest as farmers.

So it is that, despite its appearance of centrality, economics in the American experience is actually a subordinate means to predominantly noneconomic ends. Our values are not economic values, nor is our economics autonomous. Politics even decides what economic issues are allowed to appear on the stage of American history. For, to be "available" as a political vehicle an economic issue must fit into

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our political logic. It must mobilize national energies and must unify large masses across regions for joint political action and for the conquest of the central political power that is the presidency.

This explains the absence of the Great Economist. Such a man must assume the autonomy of the economic sphere in human life. He must assume the reality of economic values. If he is interested at all in politics (as few of them were), he must treat politics as a handmaiden of economics and as a tool for achieving economic purposes. These assumptions make no sense to the American experience. What flourishes in this country, therefore, are economic technicians of skill and renown, economic analysts, and expert fashioners of economic tools. We have political economists and economic politicians galore. But the climate is most uncongenial to the Great Economist. Such a man must assume an autonomous economic reality, of which the political issues are merely a reflection. In our American experience, however, economics is the conventional shorthand and the *lingua franca* for issues and decisions which are not economic, but political and moral. One might indeed formulate a basic rule of American politics to read: *If at all possible, express a political issue and design a political alignment as an economic issue and an economic alignment.*

II

The insight that economic interests can be used as the hinge of politics is commonly traced to the famous Number 10 of the Federalist Papers in which James Madison (following Harrington's *Oceana* and John Locke) concluded that power follows property. But, when Madison wrote, American political life had already, for a century, been habitually organized around economic issues and in economic alignments. Madison only codified what had been fairly general American experience during the colonial period.

Colonial legislatures had indeed no alternative if they wanted to be effective at all. The matters that now occupy a legislature — public order and law, the administration of justice or education — may have been of very great interest to them, but were normally not within their reach. They had, perforce, to be left to the individual local communities, the towns and counties. In colonial America, distances were too great, population too sparsely settled for any central authority to be effective. If the local community would not look after its own internal affairs, nobody else could. The major burning issue for the colonial legislature was relations with the mother country. And those turned on economic problems and economic questions: taxes and tariffs, coinage and credit, and so on. It was in these matters, above all, that the colony's Royal Governor was interested; for in eighteenth-century theory and practice, an overseas colony was an economic asset. Of course such recurrent disturbances as Indian ris-

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ings or the endemic war with the French occupied a good deal of the time and attention of the colonial politician. But his main job was to represent the colonist before and against the economic power represented and exerted by the Governor. His very *raison d'être* was economic. And only by identifying and organizing economic interests could the eighteenth-century colonial politician create unity in the electorate he represented – an electorate which, as the century wore on, became increasingly diversified in its other characteristics (religious beliefs, ethnic origins, and so on). There never was much need to do for the eighteenth-century politician, in the state houses of Boston, Philadelphia, and Williamsburg what Sir Lewis Namier had to do in our century for his English counterpart: to seek out and identify his economic affiliations and interests. That was the one fact about the politician in colonial America that was always clear, evident, and known to everybody.

But to Madison – and to all the brilliant politicians who, in the first quarter-century of United States history, established the political conventions and the political processes for the infant country – should be given credit for one fundamental insight: Economic interests could be used to *unify*. They could be used to overcome the pernicious "factions," the cleavage of society into ideological camps divided by their basic beliefs, which the founding fathers rightly feared as incompatible with nationhood and political stability.

The uses of economic conflict

This is a political view of economics, a view which explains economic events in terms of human behavior. This, more than anything else, distinguishes the traditional American approach to economics from the approach of the economist. The economist understands the behavior of commodities. And if he is naïve (as our present-day neo-Keynesians tend to be), he believes that human beings behave as commodities do. But even at his most profound and skeptical, he is likely to consider ordinary human behavior as economically nonrational behavior. In fact, the economist has, all along, been either suspicious or at the least contemptuous of the politician who, so it seems to him, subordinates the clear logic of economic rationality to the murky unreason of human emotions and vanities. From this starting point, the classical economists essentially arrived at a denial of politics. To them there was a pre-established harmony in the economic system with economic self-regulation automatically producing the optimum for all groups and classes in society. Marx himself was no less contemptuous of the politician: no longer accepting the classical doctrine of harmony, but instead accepting the reality of economic conflict, he deduced therefrom the inevitability, beyond any politician's contriving, of class war and revolution.

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The political economists of the American tradition never for one moment believed in pre-established economic harmony. Economic conflict was much too obvious for that. It had, after all, characterized relations between the infant colonies and the mother country, culminating finally in a violent upheaval of the political order in the Revolution. But at the same time, they saw in economic conflict their means to prevent the more dangerous ideological conflict. And they saw in economic conflict the means to establish order – *not* harmony, which they did not expect on this earth. Above all, they saw that economic conflict was the one clash within the body politic that could be managed. It could be managed because economic interests are divisible whereas political or religious beliefs are not. One can always split an economic difference in two – and while half a loaf is better than no bread, half a child, as King Solomon long ago perceived, is no good at all. The same goes for half a religion, half a philosophy, or half a political principle.

Above all, their experience, unique at that time and quite at variance with what "common sense" would have taught elsewhere, had convinced the founding fathers that, unlike all other cleavages, economic conflicts tend to become less acute with time. They may not be self-healing, but they are capable of amelioration. If the fight is over "who gets how much," then one can satisfy both sides if the amount available for distribution increases. And their experience as colonists on the virgin continent had taught them that the economic pie is indeed capable of being increased by human action, rather than being fixed forever.

They may not have consciously thought this through. But Alexander Hamilton started out from the assumption that it is possible to increase the economic resources available. This assumption explains in large part why his countrymen, no matter how much they distrusted his politics, took to his economics at once, but also why he never attained full respectability as an economist. For the economist traditionally – until well past World War II – took it for granted that economic resources are given and limited, so that the problem is their most effective distribution in a system of equilibrium. In this respect Keynes, however much he otherwise might have differed from his predecessors, was as traditional as anyone. It was not until the most recent decades, until the advent of "economic development" as a goal of economic policy – with President Truman's "Point Four" declaration of the early 1950's being the crucial date – that proper economists accepted the purposeful creation of dynamic disequilibrium as possible and meaningful.

To the American – no matter how faithfully he repeated the teachings of the economist, no matter how faithfully he himself taught them in the classrooms of his colleges – it was obvious that in his country the economic resources had been proven to be capable

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of almost infinite expansion through human and, in large measure, political action. He may have agreed with the economist that this was purely the result of the rarest of accidents: the existence on this continent of vast areas of empty soil, ready for the plow, ready to be appropriated and to be converted into an economic resource. But very early we find in the actual political behavior of the American strong evidence that, deep down, he knew differently. He knew what Hamilton had known in the last decade of the eighteenth century: that there is an economic dynamic and that economic resources are the creation of man rather than of Providence. This underlies quite clearly such bold measures as the Morrill Act of 1865 which, in creating the land-grant colleges, clearly assumed that the application of knowledge creates economic value and productive capacity well beyond that given in the existing resources. It underlay, from the beginning, all American trade-union movements. American "business unionism" assumes, not only that the economic pie can be made greater, but above all that the fight over the division of the pie is by itself likely to produce a larger pie – that, in other words, economic conflict by itself leads to economic growth and therefore, at the same time, to political and social unity.

III

There can be little doubt that the American concept of "economic interest" as an effective and unifying political force has served this country exceedingly well.

In fact, it is questionable whether there could have been an American nation without it. With the wisdom of hindsight, we have come to see in the frontier a source of strength. But, in reality, the experience of the frontier must have been an almost unbearable strain – as witness all other countries that have undergone a similar experience. It was not only the kind of strain on the physical resources and on the political energies which rapid, turbulent expansion produces. Above all, it was a strain on the unity of a country in which the new tidal wave of immigrants of different social background, national origin, and religious allegiance always arrived long before the preceding wave of immigrants had been absorbed. In such a country, growing at a frenetic speed, ideological, philosophical, or religious cleavages might have been fatal.

One should not forget that the immigrants, by and large, had themselves no tradition of self-government or even of political activity; it was not, after all, the respectable or well-to-do who arrived in the holds of the immigrant ships. And yet these vast heterogeneous masses had to become a nation under one government and with one set of basic values practically overnight – or else the American experiment would have floundered. If economic interests had not been

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available as the political organizer, it would either have been necessary to impose the most rigid authority on the population or else pluralism woud have organized itself *against* the nation and its unity – with every imported tradition of religion and culture, every imported political value and belief, the focus of an ideology alien, if not hostile, to American nationhood (as is so clearly the case in Latin America).

The great phenomenon of the nineteenth century is not, after all, the rise of the American economy. It is the creation of the American nation. For a nation, as we are now finding out the world over, is not something one can easily create. It is, on the contrary, usually the fruit of long experience and of historical forces operating over many centuries. Neither the nations of Europe nor Japan were created overnight. That nationhood is difficult and takes a very long time to create is proven by the fact that, outside of these old nations – and of the United States – very few, if any, nations have yet come into being. In all of Latin America, for instance, despite centuries of political identity, only Mexico and, to a lesser extent, Brazil, can be said to be "nations" – and, in both, nationhood has come only in this century. But the United States achieved nationhood in a few short decades, or, at the most, within a century. This it owes to a very large extent to the tradition which used economic interests and their clashes and conflicts as the foundation for political issues, political alignments, and political conflicts. This has enabled the United States to tolerate, if not to encourage, pluralism in all other spheres, to survive the fiercest of civil wars, and to attain a unity of allegiance and of basic commitments which represent as strong a common bond and communion as centuries of common history, common language, and common experiences have given to any of the older nations.

The bias toward "bi-partisanship"

But the convention of economic interests has not only tended to prevent ideological issues from arising. It has forced the American political system into a nonpartisan approach to noneconomic problems.

A noneconomic issue threatens the existing political alignments. It is not easily encompassed within the American political system. The American politician shuns ideological stands, for the simple reason that they are certain to alienate a large proportion of a constituency brought together and held together by economic interests. Any noneconomic ideological stand would have at once, for instance, exploded the alliance between the lily-white, fundamentalist Protestant, and proudly Anglo-Saxon South and the cosmopolitan, largely Catholic or Jewish, working class in the big cities on which the Democratic party was based for so long. The only thing that could

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hold them together – and could thereby get a Democratic politician into federal office – was their economic opposition to the manufacturing interest.

This built into the American political process a powerful incentive to handle noneconomic issues on a "bi-partisan" basis, that is, to remove them essentially from party politics. Indeed, the greatest praise in our political system is reserved for the "patriot" who turns a potentially disruptive noneconomic issue into bi-partisan consensus. It is for this act of patriotism at the expense, legend has it, of his presidential chances, that American history primarily remembers Henry Clay. And a century later, Arthur Vandenberg earned himself a permanent place in the American political pantheon by similarly making American foreign policy after World War II "bi-partisan" – thereby again sacrificing whatever chance for the presidential nomination of his party he might ever have had. A great many voters repudiated Barry Goldwater in 1964, not because they disagreed with his views, but because his decision to take a partisan stand on noneconomic issues semed to them a greater threat to the Republic than a wrong, but bi-partisan consensus on the issues. And, in the context of the American political process, they were right.

Foreign affairs, religion, education, civil rights, and a host of other areas which, in any other country, are the bread and meat of party politics and political organization are, therefore, as much as possible, treated as "bi-partisan" in the American political system. This does not mean that they are not controversial. It means that the system, as long as it works, uses them to bring together otherwise warring factions rather than to create new factions on each side of the controversy. In fact, we much prefer not even to tackle such issues unless there is available for them a broad coalition cutting across our conventional political alignments. Again and again, initiative in such an issue is left, as if by passive agreement, to the one body within the American political system that is outside the established party alignment, the Supreme Court. That in both the great constitutional issues of the recent years, civil rights and reapportionment of voting districts, a Supreme Court decision took the place of political action in these politically crucial areas was in full accord with the tradition that goes back to John Marshall's Court. For a Supreme Court decision is the "law of the land" and thus establishes its own consensus.

The limitations of "consensus"

There are obvious and real limitations to the effectiveness of the convention of economic issues in American politics. Not every noneconomic – that is, ideological, political, or moral – issue can be either made to appear as economic or organized as "bi-partisan."

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Indeed the most important issues and decisions in the life of a nation cannot be handled in this fashion. The great example is slavery, of course, for in this country slavery did not primarily serve an economic function (as it did, for instance, in the plantation economy of Brazil). At least by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the main function of slavery was to endow the "poor white" in the South with a feeling of human superiority no matter how wretched his physical or moral condition. Even if slavery in its origin and spread was an economic institution, by the time it became an issue, that is, after 1820 or so, the main beneficiary was no longer the slave owner but rather the nonowner who derived the psychic benefits of a slave society without having to carry the increasing economic burden of maintaining the slaves. In other words, the Abolitionists, as we know know, were right: slavery in this country was a sin rather than a crime. And for this reason the abolition of slavery by itself, without true civil rights for the blacks, settled so very little.

And for this reason too, slavery could not be camouflaged as an economic issue, no matter how hard the politicians of the early nineteenth century tried. Moreover, as a truly "irreconcilable" issue, that is, as a spiritual and moral one, there could be no "consensus" on it – even though the Supreme Court of the time tried to establish it in the Dred Scott decision. Nor could the existing political organization handle such a noneconomic issue – and probably the political system of no country, no matter how organized, could have handled it. On the issue of slavery, then, the American political system floundered and sank into Civil War, almost destroying the country with it.

But even in less crucial and less sensitive areas, the American political system is not geared to handling the noneconomic issue. This is particularly true whenever foreign policy cannot be organized on the basis of "consensus" and "bi-partisanship." Any such failure leaves deep and long-lasting scars. For any such failure endangers national cohesion. This was true of the War of 1812. It was true of the bitter foreign policy conflict that preceded our entry into World War I. But for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the rift over foreign policy in the years before World War II might similarly have proven incapable of being organized within the American political system and might have torn apart American national unity. Today, Vietnam poses a similar threat.

But then there is also always a danger that our politicians may forget that the economic issue is a convention and fall into the error of believing that economics really controls politics. In domestic affairs, the danger is not very great. It is a very stupid politician who will not intuitively realize the limitations, as well as the uses, of the convention. Certainly no strong president – Jackson, Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, or Truman, for example – ever believed that economic

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interests and economic policy were by themselves sufficient, or that they necessarily prevailed. But in foreign affairs we have made this mistake again and again– and have paid dearly in every case. Again and again we have fallen for the illusion of "economic sanctions" as an effective tool in foreign affairs. And again and again we have found that they are ineffective. This holds true for the belief of the South that "King Cotton" would force the North to its knees and constrain Europe to ally itself with the Confederacy, but also for the balancing belief of the North that the Confederacy could be defeated by economic blockade. And we now also know, from the diaries of pro-Western Japanese leaders, that the economic sanctions which the United States and Great Britain imposed on Japan in 1940 and 1941 only strengthened the war party and deprived the moderates of all influence – just as the blockade of Germany in World War I emasculated the moderates in the German government and made the military extremists all-powerful. Ironically, we now also know that economic sanctions did not even work in the one case in which they seemed to have been successful – the case which probably explains the blind American belief in this policy: the "economic sanctions" of the American colonists against the first British attempt to tax them, a decade before the American Revolution. Recent historical research has made it reasonably certain that the British cabinet used the American boycott as an excuse for a retreat from a policy which had proven exceedingly unpopular among powerful backers at home, and not primarily for economic reasons.

The convention of economics as the ground of political action and organization is, in other words, just a tool. Like every tool, it has to be used with judgment. And like every tool, it has limitations. Whoever mistakes the convention for reality pays the heavy penalty one always has to pay for deceiving oneself.

But while not perfect, not infallible, and not a panacea by any means, the convention has served the American people remarkably well.

IV

The question, however, is not really how well the convention has served in the past. It is: is it still useful, still serviceable? Can the common, ordinary, political business of the American people still be ordered by the traditional rule to formulate issues, as far as possible, as economic issues, and to define alignments to the greatest extent possible as economic alignments?

It is just barely possible that this traditional convention of domestic American politics has a major future role to play in foreign and international affairs. But at the same time, it may be at the end of its usefulness at home.

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Every one of the many new countries that has come into existence in the last two decades has yet to become a nation. Every one is less well equipped for this task, by history and tradition, than was the infant American Republic two hundred years ago. In every one, the cleavages between tribes, between religions, between races run deep — and will have to be bridged fast if the country is to survive. No one of them could survive a conflict of ideologies. In this situation, a good many of them, if not all, will predictably take recourse in the elimination of politics — the vain promise of every dictatorship. Equally predictably, this will only worsen the conflicts and make them even less tractable. Predictably also, some of them at least will seek escape in braggart nationalism, if not in conquest abroad. This, too, history amply teaches, will not succeed. Only an approach to politics which allows conflicts to be productive, and to create unity across the dividing line of tribe, religion, tradition, or race would seem to fit the needs of the new countries. In the traditional American approach, which makes politics turn on economic interests and economic issues, the new countries might well find what they need, ready-made and well tested.

Indeed, this approach might become increasingly more important for the international community altogether. The world today is threatened by a danger even greater than that of class war in the nineteenth century. It is threatened by the danger of a world-wide race war of the poor and largely colored majority against the largely white minority of the rich. At the same time, this is an infinitely smaller world than was that of the eighteenth century, a world in which everybody is everybody else's neighbor and in which, therefore, there is no alternative to living together. In such a world, a political concept which allows for productive conflict, but which also organizes unity beyond the ideologies and traditions which divide, might be of the greatest importance.

We are obviously very far from any such accomplishment; the "Alliance for Progress" in President Kennedy's original version was probably the closest to it. But, in retrospect, the development efforts of the 1950's and 1960's may well one day appear as the first uncertain and faltering steps toward a new, nonideological, and yet unifying concept of international order, different alike in its flexibility and effectiveness from the world anarchy of sovereign states which has become a hopeless anachronism, and a world government which, if at all feasible, could today be only a world-wide tyranny.

The need for innovation

But at the same time, it seems likely that in domestic politics the traditional economic convention has come to the end of its usefulness. It is not that we are dissatisfied with it or that we hanker

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after ideological politics. It's just that the problems and challenges of American life no longer can be cast easily, if at all, into an economic mold. The civil rights issue in all likelihood is typical of the issues that will be central to American politics from now on: the problems of the metropolis; the structure, values, and relationships of a society increasingly organized in large and powerful institutions; or the role, function and limitations of science and technology. These questions cannot be converted into economic issues. Nor, despite President Johnson's attempts at "consensus," are they likely to admit of "bi-partisanship." Bi-partisanship is effective when the answers are known, at least in broad outline. But great political innovations, such as we need, are rarely the children of compromise.

And yet these are also issues which the traditional ideological alignments, the alignments of European politics, cannot tackle. To do as so many foreign and domestic critics of the American political system have urged us to do for well over a century – to organize our political life on the basis of "liberal" and "conservative," or "right" and "left" – would only add to the confusion. What is "liberal" in respect to the government of the metropolis? Or in respect to the relationship between the individual and the large organizations on which he depends for effectiveness, but on which he must not depend if he wants to be free? And what does it mean to be a "conservative" on these issues? There is obviously going to be violent disagreement in respect to these issues – in fact, there is need for such disagreement and for a diversity of approaches to their solution. But ideological alignments are bound to be as irrelevent to these issues as the traditional alignment by economic interests. The "New Left" is thus bound to be sterile and to be condemned to total frustration.

If, indeed, the world will permit us the luxury of domestic affairs in the next half century or so, we will not only have to face up to new issues. We shall have to devise a new approach to domestic politics altogether. This signifies a greater upheaval in our political life, a greater strain on political sanity and stability, than the new issues themselves could possibly mean and a greater opportunity for creative political thought and effective political leadership than this country has known since the days of the founding fathers.

In seizing this opportunity, we may well have to abandon the traditional reliance on economic interests and economic issues as symbols of political intercourse and as means of political organization. I hope that we will not give up with them the principle underlying them: the mobilization of conflict to create unity, and the appeal to interest against the fanaticism of ideological faction. It is not only a civilized concept; it is a principle that makes politics productive for the common good. It has served the American people well – so well that doing without the Great Economist seems a very small price indeed.

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European disunion and the technology gap

ROBERT GILPIN

In late 1964, President Charles de Gaulle of France circulated to the members of his government a study which warned that France, and indeed all of western Europe, must either adapt to the contemporary scientific-technological revolution or risk economic and political subjugation by the world's foremost scientific power, the United States. The independence of France, de Gaulle warned, was being threatened by the technological gap between the United States and western Europe. He declared that, unless France took appropriate steps to meet this challenge, she would become a relatively underdeveloped nation in a world dominated by scientific superpowers.

In the three years since de Gaulle's warning, the issue of the technological gap has become a sore point in American-European relations and a rallying cry among the Europeans. Europeans are almost unanimous in their opinion that the technological gap is real, is threatening to their long-term well being, and is widening. It was in response to this generally shared European concern that Prime Minister Harold Wilson declared that Europe is threatened by an "industrial helotry" and that Europe needs Britain's scientific and technical capabilities if it is to meet the American challenge.

For Washington, on the other hand, the technological gap is an official nonissue. When Europeans bring it up, which they frequently do, American responses normally take one of several forms. The usual

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official American response is to reply that the problem is not really a technological gap but a managerial gap or an organizational gap — or, as former Commerce Secretary John Connor put it, an "industrial disparity." On other occasions, American officials will grant that a technological gap of some sort exists, but then go on to point out to the Europeans that it is their problems, not ours. Most ingenious of all is a response which goes like this: "Look! You Europeans do what you're good at, and we'll do what we're good at. You French stick to your wine-making and perfumes; leave the computers and high-performance aircraft to us." American academic economists, who tend to share the official position on the technological gap, phrase this in more sophisticated terms. Committed to the doctrine of free trade and the principle of comparative advantage, these American economists point out that the technological gap represents a rational division of labor among the members of an emerging Atlantic economic system.

Anxieties and issues

Actually the expression "technological gap" symbolizes many things which trouble Europeans. In the first place, it symbolizes American leadership in basic scientific research. Another element is the European dependence on the United States for advanced technologies and especially those technologies of military significance: computers, electronics, atomic energy, and aerospace. A third aspect is the "brain drain" of European engineers and scientists to the United States. And fourth, the expression "technological gap" is a shorthand for all the European concern about the invasion of western Europe by large American corporations whose financial and managerial resources are seen to be far greater than those of their European competitors.

Imbedded in these European anxieties are many practical and theoretical issues to which economists and political scientists have no clear answers. For example, does a strong, national capability in basic research confer an advantage in technological innovation, or do the findings of basic research become a free good equally available to all? Second, what is the role of technological innovation in economic competitiveness? Is innovation displacing price as a factor in economic competition, as the French believe? Or third, what is the effect on western Europe of the movement of European scientists westward and of American corporations eastward?

No clear assessment of the significance of the technological gap seems possible without extensive analyses of these and related issues. Perhaps such analyses, which have only begun, will prove that the concerns of the Europeans are unfounded. However, without more evidence to the contrary, there is good reason to accept as valid the

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challenge facing Europeans as expressed in the following statement to the Conference on European Cooperation in Advanced Technology which was held in July 1965:

> Modern industrial research programmes call for material and human resources hitherto undreamed of, and resources which are beyond the capacity of even the leading European nations, with populations of fifty millions or so. The conclusion forced upon us is that the European countries must pool their efforts if they wish to play a continuing part in world economic development. Otherwise, it will not be many years before they are so far behind the United States and the Soviet Union in advanced industrial fields that, relatively, they will have fallen to the level of underdeveloped countries.

While the economic concerns of the Europeans are real and pressing, the basic issue posed by the technological gap, as the Europeans themselves see it, is their political future. What is to be the role of Europe in a world where scientific research and massive technologies have become the basis of economic and political power? If one accepts the assumption that European nations are too small to master the technologies to which modern science is giving rise, what are the prospects for a European solution to the technological gap?

Prerequisites for a European science policy

When one speaks of European cooperation in science and technology, there is a large number of things he could have in mind. There is first of all the Concorde Project – the bilateral effort of Great Britain and France to produce a supersonic commercial transport. Second, there is the European Launcher Development Organization (ELDO) composed of seventeen European nations and Australia. Or one might have in mind the Center of European Nuclear Research (CERN), which again is a multi-national effort, but in basic research. Another is EURATOM, which is composed of the six nations of the European Economic Community, or Common Market, and has for its responsibility the development of nuclear power for peaceful purposes. One could add to the list.

With the exception of the European Center of Nuclear Research, it is difficult to give high praise to any of these efforts. The Concorde Project promises to bring great financial losses to both French and the British. EURATOM is rent by extreme national conflicts, and its future is in doubt. ELDO must overcome rising doubts with respect to its value. (Why spend millions of dollars to build a rocket launcher when Europe has no long-term space program and nothing of significance to launch?) The reasons for the difficulties in these and other cooperative efforts can be seen if one looks at the requirements for a successful European science policy – an objective being pushed by

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the French as a means to develop a common front vis-à-vis the United States.

To be successful, a European science policy must go beyond mere short-range, bilateral cooperation and must fulfill certain functions. In the first place, sustained cooperation in science and technology would necessitate a common institutional framework in the governmental, economic, and academic spheres. Second, there must be a willingness on the part of the Europeans to concentrate their limited resources and to develop a division of labor which fosters specialization, the elimination of unnecessary duplication of effort, and the efficient utilization of resources. Third, as a prerequisite to the achievement of these first two requirements, there must be agreed upon economic, military, and political goals and policies.

Unfortunately, the attractiveness to Europeans of cooperation with the United States and the conflicts of interest and perspective which continue to divide the Europeans among themselves tend to overbalance these three requirements.

Absence of an institutional framework

Twenty years of talk of European unification have obfuscated the profound cleavages among political, economic, and educational institutions which nevertheless continue to make the articulation of a common policy toward science and technology nearly an impossibility. From the political level to university research and teaching, the development of common institutions within Europe is as yet in its infancy.

The separation which has existed between the efforts of one European nation and those of its neighbors in research and education can be illustrated in many ways. For example, prior to the founding of CERN in 1952, there were no European centers for basic research. Fundamental research is organized primarily, and supported only, on a national basis. The establishment of CERN, the initiation of a European Center for Molecular Biology, and the founding of the International Center for Cancer Research are important beginnings of cooperative research. But the larger and more significant effort required is the creation of what the French Minister for Science has called "a common market for brains." If Europeans are to build strong centers of research on the many frontiers of modern science, then they must pool their scattered manpower and financial resources. Scientific research today increasingly necessitates the coming together of a "critical mass" of costly equipment, a multitude of disciplines, and a supporting cast of technicians which no individual European nation can support in all, or even many, of the promising areas of research.

Though specialized organizations such as CERN are an impor-

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tant step forward, the barriers to the free flow of scientists and ideas must come down and a framework for European collaboration on a broader basis must be established. "Among these barriers," a recent OECD Conference of Ministries of Science brought out, "are rigid structures in universities, poor interchange between universities and industries, lack of equivalence between various countries' pay scales and university degrees, and lack of provision for travel and post doctoral fellowships." In short, effective cooperation in basic research may very well necessitate the creation of a truly European system of higher education.

In industrial research and development on a European scale, one witnesses the same pattern of institutional fragmentation. Though there are the shaky but nevertheless "successful" efforts such as Euratom, ELDO, and the Concorde project, in the long run and across the broad front of technology the type of technical collaboration required is that which can only be provided by existing industrial firms (whether private or government-owned). Here, the elaboration of a European science policy faces a double obstacle. In the first place, Great Britain, which has the most to contribute to a united European effort in the areas of advanced technologies — aviation, computers, reactors, space, etc. — is outside the framework of the emerging European economic community. Second, among the Six themselves the economic and political foundations for extensive scientific and technical cooperation have not been developed and may be actually eroding.

Unanticipated consequences of the Common Market

One train of reasoning which has provided a basis for the European Economic Community has been the belief that a common market would lead logically to the formation of European corporations jointly owned and controlled by Europeans of different nationalities. This merger of corporations across national boundaries was expected by some to eliminate national economic rivalries and create binding, transnational economic interests. It followed that the growth and meshing of these many vested interests would slowly erode the significance of national borders, and political unification would evolve on the basis of common economic interests.

This expectation that a European common market would lead to European ownership of industry has not borne fruit. On the contrary, the forces set into motion by the Common Market appear to be moving Europe in a direction not foreseen by the signers of the Treaty of Rome. For a number of reasons, the rationalization of the European economic system is taking place along national *and* Atlantic lines, not European. The corporate merger movement in Western Europe is taking place almost entirely either within national bound-

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aries or else between European and American firms. In contrast to the flood tide of mergers within individual European countries and the growth of American-European ties, by 1968 there had been only one major corporate merger across European frontiers, and it was only a partial one.

As a consequence of this situation, the only international corporations operating in Europe tend to be American. Through the establishment of new subsidiaries throughout Europe, mergers with European firms, and outright purchase of European firms, American companies are rationalizing and integrating the European economy. In the words of Charles Kindleberger, "It looks as though the international corporation, typically that with headquarters in the United States, is the leading prospect for the effective instrument of European integration." As Pierre Drouin cynically observed in *Le Monde,* "Actually the Common Market benefits American industry more than European" because only the Americans have the resources and managerial experience to take advantage of it.

What appears to be happening is that the economic forces being set into motion by the Common Market run counter to the reorganization of the European economy on the basis of European corporations. The lowering of tariff barriers among the Six has encouraged the rush into Europe of American corporations eager to gain a foothold in the vast continental market which is rapidly coming into existence. In response to this American corporate "invasion," European corporations are either linking up with the invaders or else are mobilizing to meet the challenge on a national basis rather than through the pooling of their scattered resources and talents in large Europe-based corporations. The French even have prevented the merger of French and other European firms; the French, it would seem, are less interested in having their firms controlled by other large European firms than they are concerned over American domination.

The reasons for the absence of a "European" response to the challenge posed by the Common Market and the American corporate offensive are many: the absence of a European legal framework within which mergers can take place, the weakness of the European capital market, the legacy of corporate rivalry and pride, differences among economic systems ranging from the German commitment to *laissez-faire* to the French emphasis on planning and nationalized industries. At the same time, mergers taking place entirely within a nation, and especially the formation of an alliance with an American corporation, suffer no such inhibitions. "What happens," Raymond Aron has explained, "is that when a European firm is in trouble it always goes to an American firm to get out of trouble, because its European sister firms will not come forward and provide true security, size, technology, and financial means."

Embedded in all the technical factors involved in formulating a

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European corporate law or a common tax policy are profound political issues and conflicting national interests. Furthermore, given the French insistence that uniformity among national practices be achieved through the enactment of parallel national laws and policies ("parallelism") rather than through the emergence of a European legal structure, it will take a very long time to work out differences among the Six.

Dispersion and duplication

The formulation of a European science and technical policy requires not only the creation of a common institutional framework, but the elaboration as well of an extensive division of labor and concentration of resources. Given Europe's limited scientific resources, not every European country can have "centers of excellence" in every important and promising area of research and development. Unnecessary duplication must be avoided and priorities must be established within individual countries.

Unfortunately, the same fears and ambitions which cause Europeans to be wary of overdependence on the United States for science and technology operate also as barriers to effective intra-European cooperation. From basic research through technological development and production, each nation wants to maximize its own self-sufficiency and to minimize dependence on other nations. Few nations, for example, want to be dependent on another for basic research in potentially important areas; basic research is believed to be not only a source of useful inventions, but it also attracts the best scientific minds. Without a strong basic research program, a nation runs the risk of a "brain drain."

Similarly, with respect to collaboration in technological development the same tendency toward self-sufficiency obtains. In areas of considerable commercial or military importance, industries and nations are reluctant to collaborate. Even where equitable arrangements for the sharing of benefits can be worked out in advance, nations fear that their own industries will become atrophied. What one observes is that, rather than have its advanced technological industries link up with those of other European countries, each member of the Six — through research contracts, purchasing policies, and other inducements — is encouraging the merger of local companies into essentially nationalized industries in these areas.

This present tendency toward self-sufficiency tends to foreclose the possibility of large European firms and the creation of a guaranteed large European market with corresponding benefits of economies of scale. As *The Economist* has pointed out,

> the combined market for electronics capital goods in Britain, France, and West Germany was less than 20 per cent of the American market.

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> Divide that into three or less equal parts and you have indigenous firms based on national markets that are barely more than . . . twentieth the size of the American one. It is not surprising that American corporations have virtually taken over the computer industries of Germany, France, and Italy . . . and nearly knocked out the British industry in 1964.

The European response to the "technological gap," this article continues, "is that in a whole host of major industries, from coal and steel and aviation to nuclear energy and cars and computers, the trend is towards one or two national firms that are treated as national assets: they have become the chosen instruments of their governments." As a consequence commercial rivalries are being nationalized and a unified European response to the American industrial challenge cannot be articulated.

Just as France or Germany may worry about the gap between themselves and the United States, the lesser developed Western European countries such as Italy worry about the gap between themselves and the more developed of their partners. In Euratom, ELDO, and other organizations, the gap between the more developed and less developed nations makes cooperation and a "rational" division of labor extremely difficult. The arguments employed by both sides are reminiscent of those one encounters when Europeans and Americans talk about the Atlantic technological gap. In French eyes, intra-European cooperation should maximize Europe's (read France's) existing strengths; any other course is seen to be an ineffective use of Europe's scarce resources. The Italians, on the other hand, see this practice as a means to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The purpose of European scientific and technical cooperation, according to the Italian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, is not to enable France to compete better against America, but to close the intra-European science gap.

A similar tendency to subordinate community interest to national interest is seen with respect to the distribution of research and development contracts. In both Euratom and ELDO the policy is to distribute contracts among the participating states in proportion to their financial contribution, rather than on the basis of some more rational allocation criteria. As such it is impossible to concentrate resources on priority projects or to establish an effective division of labor.

Ineffectual collaboration

The several attempts of Europeans to collaborate in science and technology support these observations. Few of the cooperative efforts undertaken by Europeans in space, atomic energy, or electronics have been noteworthy for their success. On the contrary, the escalation of costs far beyond initial expectations, the unilateral decisions of one country or another to withdraw from projects, and the suspicions of certain countries that others see European collaboration solely as a

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means to enrich themselves have made further cooperation more difficult.

In one area, however, thoughtful Europeans see a hope for a breakthrough in scientific and technical cooperation — the area of military weaponry. Although Europeans, even the French, accept the necessity of dependence on the United States for their military security, Europeans have sought to maintain their own armaments industry. In part, this has been due to a desire not to become overly dependent on the United States. For France and Great Britain, in addition, the export of weaponry has long been an important means of foreign exchange; for this reason especially they have resisted a division of labor within the Atlantic Alliance which fosters "American domination of the new-weapons market." Lastly, the Europeans have been motivated by the belief that weapons research and development have an important spin-off for the civilian economy.

Collaboration in weapons research and development has also been forced on Europeans due to the fantastic escalation of costs. Whereas a Spitfire of World War II cost little more than £5,000 to produce, the Canberra fifteen years later cost £180,000 in its early version. The production cost of the TSR-2 would have been fifteen times as much as the Canberra; its research and development cost alone would have been £300 million.

Unfortunately, the experience of European collaboration in the development and production of weapons has not been a happy one. In the first place, the Europeans have not been able to supplant American domination of the advanced weapons market. All communal programs for the production of weapons as of 1964 had used weapons perfected in America which the Europeans have produced under license. The attempts of the Europeans to design and collaborate in the production of their own weapons such as a NATO tank and the VSTOL aircraft have met obstacles of conflicting national interests and an inability to agree on common military requirements. One expert reviewing this history concluded that "the prospects today for acceptable new projects are grim, partly because nations seem unable to work out an approach for items which would be appropriate for common production, and partly because many new weapons are either technically too intricate or politically too sensitive for pooled activity."

Absence of common goals

Underlying this apparent inability of the Europeans to organize scientific and technical collaboration on a broad and continuing basis is the absence of common goals and purposes. The formulation of common objectives is the third requirement for effective European collaboration in science and technology. Unfortunately, Europeans

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are more divided among themselves in their interests and perspectives than they are united on the objectives to be achieved through co-operation. At the present time, only Great Britain and France have found a basis for extensive cooperation in a number of technical areas, but the obstacles to the ultimate success of even these projects remain very great because of the fundamental political questions which divide these two countries from each other and from the rest of Europe. The problem facing these two nations and the rest of Europe was well put by *The Economist:*

> In civilian as in military procurement, it is hard to agree on the goods or arms governments want if they do not subscribe to similar economic or defence strategies. This identity of view does not exist in piecemeal co-operation because this form of joint effort basically exists to shore up national industries, not to create a new structure. In fact, Anglo-French industrial co-operation is in many ways a form of the effort of the two countries to keep ahead of the non-nuclear rank and file in Europe.

The one significant effort of Europeans to frame common purposes and objectives as a basis for extensive collaboration in foreign policy, defense, science, and economics was the French-German Treaty of Cooperation of January 22, 1963. Negotiated by Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer, this treaty sought to create a Bonn-Paris axis around which European "unification" could form. To cement and further this alliance within an alliance, the two nations agreed to formulate common foreign and economic policies including, if de Gaulle had his way, a common policy toward American investments in Europe. In the military realm there was to be coordination of strategy and weapons development. In short, economic, scientific, and other types of collaboration were to be undertaken in order to serve a larger political purpose of French-German unity.

Perhaps this effort at close French-German cooperation was fated not to be a success regardless of American behavior toward it. French and German interests are not identical, and each wants something out of the treaty which the other is not prepared to give. For de Gaulle the purpose of the treaty is to forge a Franco-German nucleus around which could form a European community of sovereign nations independent of the United States. Germany, on the other hand, seeks to obtain greater French cooperation in support of its demands for reunification. Far from desiring the formation of a European bloc independent of the United States, the German Parliament (much to the annoyance of de Gaulle) in ratifying the treaty added a preamble that the treaty would also serve to reinforce the association between Europe and the United States as well as to strengthen NATO and to encourage British entry into Europe.

Even before the treaty was signed these differing German and French interests with respect to NATO and relations with Great Britain had come into open conflict, and the long-term prospects for

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the success of the treaty were dimmed. But whatever might have been or may yet be, the United States unintentionally or by design (as de Gaulle contends) destroyed the efficacy of the alliance through its subsequent actions. In the words of Henry Kissinger, the United States reacted to the treaty by undertaking

> an assiduous wooing of the Federal Republic. One motive behind the MLF was to prevent West Germany from accepting a possible French offer of nuclear cooperation. . . . In order to tie Germany to us, successful efforts were made to have German arms purchases funneled to the United States. The culmination of this process was an agreement between Secretary McNamara and Defense Minister von Hassel signed on November 14, 1964, which in effect made the German armed forces dependent on the United States for their military equipment.

Similarly, in other areas of advanced technology – aviation, computers, atomic energy – there has developed in effect an American-German alliance which in turn has limited close French-German collaboration. In aviation every German aviation company but one is linked with an American company; IBM dominates the German computer market; and, in atomic energy, Germany is developing her industry through purchasing American designs and licenses. Recent proposals of the American government for joint American-European space research cooperation, and the enthusiastic German response, impress Frenchmen as yet another example of American seduction of their German partner and a device calculated to destroy the budding joint European space effort.

The priority of politics

Measured in terms of the past, progress in European scientific and technological cooperation since the end of World War II has been considerable. Twenty years ago one never would have thought that such developments as CERN and the Concorde were possible. Yet, cooperation on a scale which would enable Europe to balance the Great Powers in areas of advanced science and technology is severely limited by at least three factors. In the first place, bilateral cooperation will not take the European countries very far; it simply does not ensure a sufficient scale of resources or a guaranteed large market. Second, political agreement on diplomatic, strategic, and economic goals must precede successful scientific-technical cooperation; without such agreement on long-term goals the nations of Europe are unwilling to subordinate their immediate and parochial interests for the sake of a truly European effort in science and technology. And, third, in almost every area of science and technology, continental Europe – if it is to balance the United States – needs Great Britain; the entry of Great Britain into the European Economic Community could double its resources and also would do much to redress the

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Atlantic imbalance in science, technology, and economic power.

In the last analysis, therefore, one can only conclude that, without political unity, and unless the present course of developments is drastically altered, the Committee on Medium-Term Economic Policy of the Common Market is correct in its assertion that "if the six countries remain, as they probably have done for a generation, the main world importers of discoveries and exporters of brains, they will be condemning themselves to a cumulative underdevelopment which will soon render their decline irremediable." Perhaps, as de Gaulle would have it, European concern over American domination may yet generate common European policies toward science and technology. If not, Europe will become ever more irrelevant as an independent power in a world whose affairs are dominated by scientific societies of continental dimensions.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
(Act of October 23, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code)

1. Date of Filing: October 1, 1967. 2. Title of Publication: *The Public Interest*. 3. Frequency of Issue: Quarterly. 4. Location of Known Office of Publication: c/o Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. 5. Location of the Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher: c/o Freedom House, 20 West 40 Street, New York, N. Y. 10018. 6. A. Publisher: Warren Demian Manshel, Coleman & Company, 120 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10005. B. Editors: Daniel Bell, 450 Riverside Drive, New York, and Irving Kristol, 90 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. 10024. C. Managing Editor: None. 7. Owner: National Affairs, Inc. (nonprofit) c/o Freedom House, 20 West 40 Street, New York, N. Y. 8. Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Per Cent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None. 10. Extent and Nature of Circulation. A. Total No. of Copies Printed: Average No. of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 7,000; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 7,000. B. Paid Circulation: (1) Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales: Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 months, 1,200; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 1,200. (2) Mail Subscriptions: Average No. of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 4,500; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 4,300. C. Total Paid Circulation: Average No. of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 5,700; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 5,500. D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier, or Other Means: Average Number of Copies during Preceding 12 Months, 100; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 150. E. Total Distribution: Average Number of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 5,800; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 5,650. F. Office Use, Left-over, Unaccounted, Spoiled after Printing: Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 1,200; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date; 1,350. G. Total: Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 7,000; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 7,000. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Irving Kristol, Editor

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Crisis in the university?

ROBERT A. NISBET

Is there one? Quite a few intellectuals think so, but this in itself is not a sure guide. Intellectuals are often prone to see "crisis" in circumstances that for other persons merely range from good to bad, desirable to undesirable. In medicine, a crisis is the point in a disease where what follows is either recovery or death. In politics, crisis is the point in the career of a specific government where what follows is either downfall or renewed strength. Some degree of precision attaches to the word in these uses. But what is meant when "crisis" is applied to, say, modern culture, democracy, religion, the family, Western civilization – or higher education?

The contemporary university has become, almost in the measure that "capitalism" once was, a cherished setting for diagnoses of "crisis" – not to mention decadence, sickness, moribundity, and so on. Rare is the month in which some outburst of student activity, or some revelation of the incidence of "pot" and LSD, does not produce fresh apprehensions. Think only of Berkeley and the immediate aftermath of the student demonstrations of late 1964: there isn't space enough in this issue of *The Public Interest* to reprint the reactions of those who saw in these unhappy events, not a complex problem in local administration, but instead a fevered symptom of nation-wide student malaise, revolt, and alienation or, changing the perspective, a crisis in the purposes of higher education in America. I would be the last to minimize the gravity and personal agony of the two years that followed the student demonstrations at Berkeley. It

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was, in every sense, a time of troubles. But a crisis of the university in America? What, precisely, is meant?

Clark Kerr has recently dealt with the subject in masterly fashion. If anyone is entitled, by intellectual gifts and searing personal experience, to see crisis in the university, it is he. But he doesn't. In an address at a major convocation in Los Angeles last year, called by Robert Hutchins and the staff at his Center (including such distinguished participants as Sir Eric Ashby, Rosemary Parks, Jacques Barzun), Mr. Kerr made so bold as to ask: where is the crisis? Certainly not, he said, in the professional schools, which manifestly are flowering. Not in the graduate schools, which are booming. Not in research. Not in the centers and institutes from which scholarly and scientific, as well as creative and imaginative works pour forth annually. These areas have their problems, but crisis is hardly the word to describe their overall state.

Where, then, *is* the crisis, asks Kerr? In the undergraduate area alone. Kerr's answer leaves the prophets of crisis a few *fleurs du mal* to be sure. But, in an analysis as relentless as it is unemotional, he emphasizes that even in the undergraduate sphere the fevered unrest taken for "crisis" is rather limited: not to be found, for example in such broad areas of undergraduate education as engineering, agriculture, and business administration. To the extent that it exists at all, Kerr concludes, "crisis" is to be found in a few, but by no means all, areas of the humanities and social sciences. Mr. Kerr does not minimize what he finds in these areas; their problems can be serious to a university and they must be met – chiefly, he believes, through the instituting of smaller "cluster" colleges. I will come back to this point in a moment.

A painful discrepancy

To many of us, Kerr's dispassionate view of the university has the ring of expert acquaintance and sharp insight. But not to W. H. Ferry, Vice President of the Hutchins' Center for the Study of Democractic Institutions at Santa Barbara, who, judging from the convocation proceedings, could scarcely contain himself at Kerr's *lèse majesté*. "The university crisis," Mr. Ferry thundered, "is not partial but general." Student disturbances should be seen "as symptomatic of deeper-lying troubles that [Kerr] either passes by or mis-identifies as evidence of health." Then Mr. Ferry adds: "I would think it far more advisable to break up the system than to continue patching its defects, no matter how ingeniously." Mr. Ferry, in short, like most of his associates at the Center in Santa Barbara, simply will not settle for less than total crisis – and, of course, total reformation.

For most of us, as I say, Clark Kerr's words on crisis will seem authoritative. But what, then, is the source of all the *intimations* of

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crisis? Student demonstrations? In one form or other, these have always been with the university. Read only Hastings Rashdall's stirring accounts, in his great history of the founding of the European universities, of early student riots and insurrections, not to mention alcoholic bouts. If such activities – along with student malaise and anomie (called *acedia* in the Middle Ages) – bespeak crisis, well, all one can say is that it has been a long crisis.

The real source of intimations of academic crisis does not lie here. The source is, as one would expect, the pain that arises from discrepancy between the City of God and the City of Man. At its most exalted, this pain lies behind the works of Plato, St. Augustine, Rousseau, and Marx. At its less exalted, however, it is the source of the captious and niggling criticism that forms the fringe of the rationalist tradition. Exalted or not, the discrepancy is closely related to what Michael Oakeshott calls, in his classic essay, "Rationalism in Politics," the "sovereignty of the felt need." Political life, says Professor Oakeshott (and we will include the university in this) "is resolved into a succession of crises, each to be surmounted by the application of 'reason.'" Or faith. And, of course, through dialogue. Nothing is more repugnant to this type of rationalist (a type that flourishes at the Santa Barbara Center) than the thought that any institution cannot be ceaselessly endowed with new purpose to assuage the pain of the felt need.

Purpose! Here, I think, we come to the nub of the matter. The contemporary university in America is guilty, so the indictment goes, because it lacks purpose. "Purpose" is another word dearly loved by a certain type of intellectual, both in and outside the academy. A few years ago there was much written about America needing "to find" a new purpose. As I recall, President Eisenhower actually appointed a committee on the subject. The Luce papers took it up, and for a number of months one couldn't open *Life* or *Time* without running smack into some new variant of the American Dream, Destiny, or Purpose. Most of this is now absent from the national arena, but it is not dead; it has only moved, like "crisis," to the university.

The search for "purpose"

No university, no college, it is said, can be legitimate until its functions are clearly translatable into explicit, verbalized *purpose*. There is enough truth in this to make it plausible. But there is also enough latent futility in it to make it inane, especially when the subject is something as large and complex as is the state, the economy, the family, or the university. Here, what Karl Popper has written on the subject of definitions is applicable. To those who argue that clarity of definition is indispensable to science, Popper replies: If so, there will be no science (ever an untidy business), only an infinite

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regression of definitions. So, I fear, with purpose. When I am told that I must make my own individual purposes clear in a given enterprise, I can understand that. But the mind boggles at the prospect of making the legitimacy of major institutions depend upon agreement of purpose to be reached by conference or committee.

All of this is not to imply that there is no purpose in the contemporary university, no common idea that gives it distinctiveness. I am only suggesting that in a large-scale historic institution such as the university, purpose is given, not by rationalist assent, arrived at on the basis of "dialogue" in conferences, but by continuous historical function, through common, if diversified, effort over long periods of time (subject always, of course, to experimental and pragmatic changes that are the result of new ideas) and, often, through collisions between the university and other institutions.

There is indeed a purpose, a central idea, in the contemporary university – in America as well as in Europe. President Pusey has recently given it expression. To the question, is there a central idea in the American university?, Mr. Pusey said: "The answer is, most certainly, yes. For such an idea is found in the devotion to learning which permeates the whole community and in the recognition of learning's importance for the full manner of life. . . . Though scholars today often appear to pursue separate ways within universities – quite unaware of their colleagues' existence . . . still, by and large, they all are, and know they are, working in a common vineyard. They know it is not their specialties but 'learning'. . . that they have in common."

To most of us this would seem an admirable and sufficient statement of university purpose: drawn, as are all purposes in large institutions, not from conference but from observation of history and of continuing function. Devotion to learning and to learning's importance for the full manner of life. Is this not a purpose? Mr. Hutchins is one of those who thinks it is not. He says that in other countries today there is a better sense of what a university is. This may be. If so, it is because in these countries the professional character of the university, for the most part, is taken for granted. Several years ago I taught at the University of Bologna, the oldest of European universities and still one of the greatest. I was amused to discover that curricular issues which burn in the American academic community – sanctity of liberal arts, general education, self-realization – simply did not exist for my colleagues on the Bologna faculty. For them, the answer to the question – what is a university? – was simple, if profound. The university is a place for scholarship in the learned disciplines; teaching, of course, but teaching within the disciplines. What comes out of the university? Professionals: professional scholars in the humanities as well as lawyers, physicians, and engineers.

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But, I asked, do you not care whether students emerge from the university experience possessed of intellectual leadership, wisdom, character, and a sense of life's wonder and challenge? Certainly, they replied, and students (or some students) do emerge from the university with these qualities. And this is no doubt good. But the purpose, the distinctive and guiding purpose of the university, is none of these. It is what it has been for many centuries: scholarship and teaching in the learned and professional disciplines.

The specter of "professionalism"

Now, I certainly don't want to imply that the good is only what is or has been; in higher education or elsewhere. And if others want to use the word "university" differently, well, we have Humpty Dumpty's (if not Alice's) authority for one's right to make a word mean just what he chooses it to mean – neither more nor less. I do not scorn the establishment of what Mr. Hutchins lovingly calls an "autonomous thinking community." (Still: "You came to think?" Jowett once snapped at a Balliol student; "About what, pray?"). I think there is also room in our affluent society for institutes for the cultivation of wisdom ("Why not take direct aim at it," asks the Center's Commodore Ferry), of "individual development," of techniques of political action, of reading dynamics, and so on. I question none of these. If funds for them can be raised, fine. But, with all possible sympathy for the pain of felt need that gnaws at these critics, I nevertheless think it is unworthy of them to imply, not merely that the university *should* dedicate itself to one or all of their proffered aims, but that, in *not* doing so, the university is betraying its trust.

What really irritates the prophets of academic crisis as they look at the university is its "professionalism." So far as I can tell, professionalism, for most of them, is anything that can't be reduced to instant dialogue. Mr. Hutchins, for several decades, has used the stick of "professionalism" to clout the university in America. He has always confined his thwacks, of course, to the more extreme examples. His target used to be schools of administration, but now that some of these have become important centers of basic research, he has had to look elsewhere. In his address at the convocation in Los Angeles, he used schools of embalming. It seems that at the last meeting he attended of Big Ten presidents, the question of a proposed school of embalming came up. One gathers from the context that this is just about what Mr. Hutchins thinks the university in America – Harvard, Berkeley, Columbia, as well as the Big Ten – has come to.

Speaking for myself, I wouldn't particularly care to see a school of embalming on any university campus. And I don't expect to. But if I had to choose between a university in which there was the slight

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danger of such a school being added – as the result of the university's general commitment to professional education – in society's service – and a so-called university made aseptically safe from schools of embalming by its consecration to the type of thought that flows so effortlessly at the Center in Santa Barbara, I would unhesitatingly choose the first. In it, at least, embalming would be "narrow," "specialized," and even "fragmented."

Lest I seem uncritically and unwontedly adulatory of an institution that requires all the informed criticism it can get, I do want to pinpoint one tendency in the American university that bodes ill for both its unity and autonomy in society. It has nothing to do with "professionalism," for it is to be found in the basic areas of the university, and it is as easy to imagine it in the humanities, given suitable funding, as in the sciences. I am referring to a novel and rapidly spreading pattern of research: project research.

Research as such is, of course, the life blood of the university. Without it – and I mean *visible* research – university teaching would degenerate in a decade to the kind of thing that goes on piously in Great Books circles and dialogue-seminars. But the indispensability of research does not mean *all types and structures* of research. The genius of the university has been its capacity to unite teaching with research, to make the former a part of the latter. That is, research and teaching were (and still are generally) united in the carrying-on of research with students *as students.*

What we are beginning to witness today, however, and on a steadily widening front, is the acceptance by universities (with the all too eager acquiescence, even initiative, of faculty members) of types of research that not only could be done more appropriately by agencies outside the university – industrial and governmental – but have the effect within the university of destroying the time-honored union of research and teaching. Both in scale and in nature, this research seems to me fundamentally incompatible with the demands of teaching. To be sure, such research uses students; but there lies the rub. For with rising frequency one hears the complaints of students that they are being "used" rather than taught; used as technicians, as employees, as spectators, but not as students. There is also the structural character of much of this project research; it looms up as a kind of *imperium in imperio.* That grantsmanship has already shown signs of replacing scholarship is perhaps important enough. But of greater long run importance, it seems to me, is the sheer impact upon university unity – and then university autonomy in society – that organized research of this scale and entrepreneurial type represents. But, as I say, this has almost nothing to do with professionalism. Recent informal inquiry into one large area of professionalism in the American university – law schools – convinces me that here at least, and certainly in the best ones, there is a better union of teaching and

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research, greater dedication to teaching, than one finds in many of the nonprofessional fields.

Life adjustment

But let us go back to the single area of the university that even the temperate Clark Kerr concedes may have some crisis in it: the undergraduate levels of *some* of the social sciences and humanities. Mr. Kerr, as I noted earlier, believes that the turbulence of this area could be offset in considerable part by the establishment of "cluster colleges" such as those to be found in the new Santa Cruz campus of the University of California. I wish I could agree, but I don't think they would really affect the matter. The essence of the problem does not seem to me to lie in large classes and corps of teaching assistants. After all, as Mr. Kerr has noted, there are large areas of the sciences and social sciences at Berkeley in which these conditions existed but out of whose ranks came few if any of the students in revolt.

More important, the cluster college would not be exempt, I think, from that larger problem that today besets the liberal arts college everywhere: the attraction to it of first rank intellects and scholars; those whom, quite frankly, the best students are eager to work under, even to simply listen to, irrespective of curricular context.

If there is one single part of the contemporary university in America that deserves the word "crisis" for its present condition, it is the historic liberal arts college within the university (I am not here referring to the separate liberal arts colleges – the Swarthmores and Amhersts – about which I know little). The trouble with this venerable institution is that its function has become increasingly unclear and, taken simply as a curricular fastness, less and less challenging to faculty members and students alike. It is easy to blame a crass and unfeeling society for this, to invoke the familiar demon of professionalism. But the sad and distasteful fact seems to be that its moribundity arises from its own nature. The corporate atmosphere of *in loco parentis* is of diminishing appeal to students and faculty. The effort to find in curriculum alone – bank upon bank of requirements that "everybody should have," to quote the familiar phrase from the catalogue – a substitute corporatism is ever more obviously unavailing. This is in part because many students (coming from secondary schools that have become immeasurably better in recent decades) find the work in this area too often repetitive and ritualistic; after all, there can be cross-*sterilization* as well as fertilization. In larger part, however, the cause lies in the unwillingness of faculty – and I mean, with the rarest exceptions, the best faculty – to participate. Vigorous minds are too busy being intellectually vigorous to suffer gladly the countless hours of teaching *and non-teaching* that the liberal arts college calls for. Over and over in American universities faculty mem-

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bers produce plans for model colleges. But over and over the same faculty members then manifest small inclination to participate in what they have helped to create. The best usually flee, the worst stay on, engaged in endless curriculum-tinkering or rearrangement of icons. My clear impression is that this situation is better on the whole in the Ivy-league universities than in the others. But even at a Harvard or Columbia the state of the college would not appear rugged.

One of the consequences of the moribundity of the college within the university is a desperate turning to other missions, and here we run smack into what I can only call "life adjustment." It may well be that the greater sense of unease and frustration that one finds in undergraduate psychology, sociology, political science, and also philosophy and literature today in the American university stems from trying to make these disciplines serve two rather different functions: on the one hand, *scholarship in learned disciplines* and, on the other, *life adjustment* or, as the case more often is, *adjustment of life.* Ever since the Jacobs study years ago revealed, to the author's evident dismay, that many students in college were graduating with their social values unchanged, there has been a constantly accumulating interest in the college as a *place primarily for the radical dislocation of old values and the radical adoption of new ones.* (Cluster colleges of course, would make *this* function vastly more successful of achievement.)

The burden typically falls on the social sciences and humanities, or some of them, for the other learned disciplines simply won't play this life-adjustment game. They say — in mathematics, biology, Oriental languages, physics, etc. —that they have other and vitally necessary ends in view: preparing students for the hard work of scholarship in these disciplines. But, as is all too evident, there are many in the social sciences and humanities who will play the life-adjustment game and who, moreover, begin to think of it as the primary, even exclusive, purpose of a university or college education. What, it is asked— sometimes passionately, sometimes solemnly — could be more important than making what students learn seem "meaningful" to their social and political activities? This leads inexorably, of course, to the now widely popular concept of the college as a setting for "individual development." A few decades ago, when the exponents of life adjustment in the secondary schools threatened to drive out the disciplines of mathematics, English, and history in favor of courses organized around the theme of individual and social development, most of us in the universities rolled up our sleeves and went into battle. And, with the aid of Sputnik, we won. But now life adjustment has come to the university. What else is one to make of the following passage, taken from the preface of Nevitt Sanford's recent book, *Where Colleges Fail?*

"My aim," writes Mr. Sanford, who is Professor of Psychology

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and Director of the Institute for the Study of Human Problems at Stanford University, "is to help restore the student to his rightful place at the center of the college's activities. I state the case for individual development as the primary aim of education, present a theory of how students actually develop, and then apply it to various aspects of the student's development and the college's educational procedures."

It should be understood that Professor Sanford is very serious about this aim of individual development. He continues: "If the development of the individual is the primary aim, then colleges should organize all their resources in efforts to achieve it. Such planning of a *total* educational environment must be guided by a theory of personality . . ." (italics in the original).

Just what is to become of the learned disciplines in the setting envisaged by Professor Sanford, where the *total* aim is individual development, guided by *a* theory of personality, is not clear. But we can guess.

May I say here, as I did earlier about some other objectives for the university, that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with Professor Sanford's objective. And, as I noted in reporting my conversation with Bologna faculty members, individual development is indeed to be admired when one finds it. But made the aim of a university? Or, for that matter, of undergraduate social sciences and humanities? What happens, in that case, to sociology, political science, and other fields if we conceive them also as (what they are in fact) complex and abstract disciplines, fully as demanding in intellectual terms, as chemistry or biology? Is it really possible to organize, say, sociology at one and the same time around the kind of objectives that Professor Sanford has in mind and also those peculiar to a science? I know it is possible in the form of ringing declarations at conferences on student alienation. But I mean in actual courses, and in curricula.

I would like to say again that I am deeply mindful of the fact that individual development, the transvaluation of student values, the emergence of wisdom and leadership have ever been among the consequences of university student life — and nowhere more resplendently than at Oxford and Cambridge. But if one reads correctly the histories, memoirs, and published letters that tell us about these great universities, it was scholarship and teaching-within-scholarship that were nonetheless held to be the central purposes. No one, surely, imagined that you could, in Mr. Ferry's or Professor Sanford's words, take direct aim at wisdom or individual development.

Or at leadership. When Macaulay, no idle worshipper of a classical education, was asked why he chose so many students of the classics for the civil service, his answer was: Because classics is where the brightest minds are. And he went on to say: If astrology were the preferred subject at Oxford and Cambridge, I shouldn't

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mind; I would select those best at casting nativities; the results, for my purposes, would be the same. Macaulay was, in short, under no illusion that curriculum creates leaders.

A question of legitimacy

This leads us to one final aspect of the matter; the *legitimacy* of individual development, or personal values, as an aim of the university. Quite a few faculty members think they are legitimate; and a very wise young man, Michael Drosnin, only recently graduated from Columbia College, where he was editor of the student newspaper, has told us in an important article, that many of his college teachers made no bones about declaring that "it is the college's role to substitute a new set of values for those the student has inherited from his previous environment." Mr. Drosnin, however, disagrees. He writes (his article is to be found in *The Educational Record*, Summer, 1966, and also in a volume just published by the American Council on Education):

"But this, I believe is a misunderstanding of both the college's responsibility and the student's desire.... Recent campus protests criticising the impersonality of the modern university have led many concerned faculty members to adopt the mistaken notion that undergraduates are seeking in the professor both a father and a friend. Actually, most students want neither; they are quite happy to have finally escaped parental domination and even parental guidance, and would rather find their friends among their contemporaries. *What they want in a professor is, quite simply, a professor....* When today's student decries the lack of communication between teacher and student, he is likely to be attacking the breakdown within, rather than outside, the classroom. The lack of concern he finds disturbing inheres not in the limited nature of extra classroom contact, but in the limited interest the professor displays in his classroom performance" [italics mine].

Well! This is unexpected counsel indeed. What this wise Columbia student is saying, very respectfully but firmly, is: please don't bother with all the palliatives now being worked out in faculty and administrative committees across the land. Just come to class – prepared! What we want in a professor is, quite simply, a professor – neither a life adjuster, nor an adjuster of life.

Somehow, as I think of all the faculty members who are getting leaves from the classroom these days to work out solutions to restlessness among students, it seems to me that the best commentary is contained in an old, now famous, Herblock cartoon. It was drawn when the late John Foster Dulles was incessantly engaged in missions outside Washington, D. C. It showed President Eisenhower sitting at the telephone saying: "Foster, don't just *do* something; *stand* there."

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On class in America

CHRISTOPHER JENCKS
and
DAVID RIESMAN

Until relatively recently, most Americans were allergic to discussions of social class in this country. In part, this was because they assumed social classes were by definition hereditary. Admitting their existence, would, therefore, undermine the idea that America rewarded diligence and competence no matter what their ancestry. But the desire to believe that America was a classless society had other roots, too. The New World's great achievement was said to be its respect for regional, religious, and ethnic variety, as well as for groups that the Old World looked upon as less equal than others: for women as well as men, for the young as well as the old, for manual as well as cerebral work, for the culture of the populace as well as of the palace. Diversity was thus portrayed as the product of egalitarian pluralism rather than of invidious hierarchies. Talk of social classes seemed to deny this.

There were, of course, skeptics. Many 19th-century observers noted, for example, that the elimination of traditional social hierarchies had forced Americans to rely on the one surviving measure of power and prestige: money. Cash was by no means evenly distributed, even in pre-industrial America. Those who had less than their share almost always envied those who had more, while those who had more reciprocated by looking down on those who had less.

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In this respect, then, America was never really a classless society. Wealth and poverty in America allegedly depended on individual merit more than on ancestry, but few denied that they were a source of inequality, just as in Europe.

Despite all the talk about "respect for honest labor," moreover, Americans were stratified in terms of their jobs as well as their incomes. So long as the majority of men lived on farms, manual labor was nearly universal. Nonetheless, there were probably very few young men, even in pre-industrial America, who would not have chosen a job which required them to use only their head over a job which required them to use only their back. Urbanization, industrialization, and the increasingly complex division of labor intensified and complicated these concerns. Not only was there a division between blue collar and white collar workers, but there were further divisions within these two broad classifications. Some white collar workers, such as plant managers and higher government officials, exercised a good deal of power over other people; others, such as self-employed professionals and businessmen, had less direct power over others, but they had more control over their own lives. Clerical and sales workers usually had neither. Just as with money, so too with power: those with less envied those with more, while those with more felt superior to those with less. The result was another system of stratification, based on occupation, parallel to that based on income.

As a general rule, the economic and occupational hierarchies reinforce each other. Most jobs of high prestige and power also pay well, and most jobs which pay well give their holder both prestige and power. Those with "upper-middle" jobs are therefore likely to have "upper-middle" incomes, and those with "lower" incomes are likely to have "lower" jobs. In the discussion which follows we will therefore collapse *economic* and *occupational* class into a single concept, which we will call *social class*. When we speak of the upper-middle class, for example, we will mean families headed by someone with a professional or managerial job, usually making at least twice as much as the average American family. When we speak of the lower-middle class we will mean families headed by clerical or sales workers, or small businessmen, usually earning fairly close to the median national income. When we speak of the working class we will mean families headed by a blue-collar worker, again with incomes close to the national average. When we speak of the lower class we will mean families whose head is frequently unemployed and often a woman, with average incomes around half the national average.

A lack of perfect congruence

It is important to emphasize that these categories are by no means perfectly descriptive. Occupational power and prestige do not

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always correlate perfectly with income, even in principle. A judge, for example, usually has more power and prestige than an attorney, but he usually makes less money on the bench than he would in private practice. The result is that some men prefer to remain attorneys even when offered a judgeship, while others will spend large sums to become judges. Similarly, clergymen usually have more power and prestige than undertakers serving the same parishioners, but usually make considerably less money. The result is a certain degree of dissonance. There an additional problem. The most powerful and prestigious jobs in America are mostly "professional" or "managerial." But these two categories also include many jobs which nobody regards as prestigious. The Census category, "managers, officials, and proprietors," for example, includes self-employed peanut vendors as well as the President of the United States, while the category "professional, technical, and kindred" includes stripteasers and baseball umpires as well as prosperous Wall Street lawyers and atomic physicists.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising to find that many of those who hold nominally professional or managerial jobs do not have incomes anything like double the national average. In 1960, for example, about 10 percent of the male labor force held professional jobs, and another 10 percent held managerial jobs. Within this crudely defined "top fifth" of the occupational distribution, only 46 percent also had incomes which put them in the top fifth of economic distribution. A more detailed, and therefore more sensitive, selection of those in the top fifth of the occupational distribution would undoubtedly increase the proportion falling in the income elite, but it would by no means make the two synonymous.

Another way to describe this lack of congruence between the two distributions is to start with an economic elite and look at its occupational distribution. Table 1 shows the broad occupational categories of the heads of the richest 5 percent of all American families in 1959. While the majority with "upper" incomes have "upper" jobs, there are plainly a lot of deviant cases. This is equally true of those with "upper-middle," "lower-middle," and even "lower" incomes.

Defining social class

Despite these difficulties, there is certainly enough parallelism between the income hierarchy and the job hierarchy to justify talking about social stratification. Indeed, stratification, while perhaps not absolutely necessary, is found in all societies actually extant or readily foreseeable. Yet to say that social classes are traditional and universal does not mean that they are everywhere and always the same. It is therefore important to say something about the changing character and size of social classes.

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TABLE 1. *Occupations of Heads of Families with Incomes over $15,000 in 1959*

OCCUPATION	
Self-Employed Professional	12
Salaried Professional	14
Self-Employed Businessman	15
Salaried Businessman	23
Clerical or Sales Worker	14
Blue Collar Worker	16
Farmers	3
Unknown	3
Total	100

Source: *1960 Census*, I (1), Table 230. In 1959 5.1 percent of all families reported incomes over $15,000. The distribution for unrelated individuals was considerably lower.

In a sense, this is a matter of definition. Some people, for example, define class in strictly relativistic terms. One can, for example, define the "upper middle class" as the richest and most powerful fifth of the population. It is clearly impossible for an upper-middle class defined in this way to grow proportionately larger or smaller over time. Conversely, one might define those whose jobs put them in the bottom fifth of the occupational distribution as a lower class. Having assumed this, no research is needed to show that the size of this lower class is fixed and cannot be reduced by, e.g., an anti-poverty program. This sort of definition may capture a good deal of the truth about life in a competitive society. But it has the disadvantage of concealing change even when it takes place.

Other people therefore define class in absolute terms, saying that anyone who can afford two cars is middle class, or that anyone who has a nonmanual job is middle class, or some such thing. This sort of definition obviously makes the size of classes very responsive to technological innovations. During the past sixty years, for example, productivity has more than doubled. The increase in real per capita GNP between 1909 and 1966 was between 150 and 175 percent. If one had defined the "lower class" in absolute terms in 1909 as any family with $750 a year or less, the term would have subsumed half the population. If this same absolute standard were again used in 1966 (with inflation taken into account), it would embrace only about one family in eight.

Does this sort of definition help us understand society better than the strictly relative one just discussed? What does it mean to say that the "lower class" has now shrunk to a quarter its size in 1909? It seems fairly clear that such a proposition greatly exaggerates

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the character and rate of social and cultural change. The real incomes of the poorest fifth of the American population today, for example, approximate those of the second fifth during the 1930's. Yet this does not mean that the poorest fifth of today's American population resembles the second fifth of the 1930's in other important respects. The fact of being at the bottom seems to be at least as important as absolute purchasing power in defining families' life styles. Families in the poorest fifth of the population today may have twice the real income their grandparents had, but they have so much less than today's typical family that they still *feel* very poor. But competitive, subjective feelings aside, families with the lowest incomes have great difficulty getting along because the changing economic and social arrangements of an industrial society presume a certain level of affluence, and this is always more than the poorest families have. When the median income was $750, for example, public transportation was essential for the majority of the population and was available to it. Today, on the other hand, 80 percent of all families can afford an automobile. Public transportation has therefore deteriorated, and the minority which still cannot afford a car may be, in this respect, worse off than before.

Similar ambiguities mark the history of the occupational distribution. The occupational structure has been significantly upgraded over the past hundred years. The typical job today requires more brain-power and less muscle than it did a century ago. In 1900, for example, 42 percent of all men worked on farms; by 1960 it was 9 percent. Similarly, one man in seven was an unskilled laborer in 1900; by 1960 it was one in fourteen. Conversely, the proportion of men doing what the Census calls professional work has risen from one in thirty to one in nine since 1900, most of the increase coming since 1940. The proportion classified as "managers, officials, and proprietors" has risen from one in fifteen to one in nine, and the rise would be even greater if one looked solely at managers and officials and excluded small businessmen. But this does not tell us whether the typical worker has more or less control over his own job situation than in the past, or whether modern economic institutions diffuse power or concentrate it.

Room at the top?

Very little is known about the distribution of power in the occupational structure. Sociologists have chronicled the movement of workers from manual to nonmanual jobs, from farm to city, and from job to job. Some have concluded that since the fastest growing groups are those which have traditionally exercised the most power over society, there is more "room at the top" today than in the past. This conclusion is, however, probably premature. True, there are

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more people in jobs traditionally defined as "professional" and "managerial" in 1967 than in 1900, and fewer people chopping cotton or digging ditches. But changes of this kind do not necessarily mean any basic change in the distribution of power, prestige, or even self-respect. A janitor is still at the bottom of the heap even if he throws the switch on an oil furnace instead of stoking a coal furnace, and a farm-owner's son is still in the middle of the heap if he becomes a school teacher, even though he has nominally risen into the "professional class."

Noting all this, some observers have jumped to the opposite conclusion. Economists, for example, have noted the declining number of small businesses, both farm and nonfarm, and the increasing concentration of corporate power as a result of mergers. Some radicals have taken this as prima facie evidence that power is today concentrated in fewer hands than a generation or two ago. This implies that there is less and less room at the top. Actual ownership of large corporations has, however, grown more diverse as their domination of the economy has increased. Ownership, moreover, may be less important than radicals assume. It is far from clear, for example, that the owner of a corner grocery store has more power vis à vis his creditors, suppliers, and customers than the salaried manager of a supermarket. Nor is it obvious that a 19th-century farmer had more freedom of action in his confrontations with the weather, the railroads, the banks, and the market than his teacher grandson in his confrontations with school principals, boards of education, parents, and students.

Under these circumstances we cannot assume that the relative size of various social classes is changing just because the overall standard of living and the overall level of occupational competence are rising. Instead, we must regard the size of social classes as a researchable question, albeit one to which definitive answers are never likely to be available, the idea of social class itself being so imprecise. One way to investigate this question is to look at the distribution of occupational power and family income among various strata. If, for example, the most powerful 5 percent of the work force could be shown to exercise less control over the economy than fifty years ago, and the next most powerful 15 percent could be shown to exercise more, we could conclude that the relative size of the upper and upper-middle classes had changed. If, correspondingly, the poorest fifth of all families once consumed 10 percent of the nation's goods and services, and if the same slice of the pie were now divided among the poorest quarter of the population, we could conclude that the lower class had grown.

Fortunately for society, but unfortunately for social scientists, the power or influence of a given job is hard to quantify. The closest approximation is probably pay. Despite the exceptions noted earlier,

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jobs which give the incumbent what is usually called responsibiilty tend to pay well, while those which involve little power usually pay badly. Hence if the amount of room at the top of the occupational structure were increasing, we would expect more people to be sharing in the slice of the pie traditionally reserved for the elite. Conversely, if the number of menial and expendable jobs were diminishing, we would expect to find fewer people dividing the (much smaller) slice of the pie that is traditionally available for society's castoffs.

In point of fact, however, Table 2 indicates that there has been no significant change in the distribution of income since 1945. This

TABLE 2. *Share of All Income Going to Top 5 Percent and to Each Fifth of All American Families and Individuals, 1929–1962*

Year	Top 5 Percent	Net 15 Percent	Second Fifth	Third Fifth	Fourth Fifth	Bottom Fifth	Total
1929	30.0	24.4	19.3	13.8	12.5		100.0
1935-6	26.5	25.2	20.9	14.1	9.2	4.1	100.0
1941	24.0	24.8	22.3	15.3	9.5	4.1	100.0
1947	20.9	25.1	22.0	16.0	11.0	5.0	100.0
1957	20.2	25.3	22.4	16.3	11.1	4.7	100.0
1962	19.6	25.9	22.7	16.3	10.9	4.6	100.0

Source: Herman P. Miller, *Income Distribution in the United States*, Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966, p. 21. The data are from the series prepared by the Office of Business Economics. Miller also presents data from the Current Population Survey for years since 1947. Although the CPS data suggest that both the richest 5 percent and the poorest 20 percent are somewhat worse off than the above figures indicate, the differences are small and stability since 1947 is equally apparent. More recent data based on the CPS are shown in *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 51, January 12, 1967, Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967. These data suggest a slight decline in the proportion of income going to the top 5 percent between 1961 and 1965, but the overall pattern of postwar stability remains.

makes it hard to believe that there has been much change in the distribution of occupational power and prestige. The whole labor force has been upgraded, but the relative position of various classes has evidently changed very little. There is, however, evidence that the share of all income going to the top 5 percent of all families declined considerably both during the Depression and during World War II. This suggests that these two upheavals may well have altered the occupational structure in significant ways, even though redistribution of workers among job categories was no more dramatic in these years than later. Although no good data are available on the overall income distribution before 1929, tax returns from the well-to-do suggest that their share of the pie changed very little between 1913 and 1929. This being the case, the safest working assumption is probably that there was little change in the overall distribution during those years.

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Social class and social mobility

What does this imply about social class in America? It seems clear that technological change and improvements in human skills have increased the productivity of the labor force and that the increase in productivity has led to rising living standards for virtually all Americans. Yet the distribution of goods and services has remained relatively constant despite the rise in absolute living standards. And it should be noted that, if both the rich and the poor increase their income at about the same rate over the years, the *absolute* gap between them will necessarily grow. Ten is to one as a hundred is to ten: but the absolute gap in the latter case is ten times greater than in the former. Between 1947 and 1962, for example, 80th-percentile income was always between 4.0 and 4.5 times as much as 20th-percentile income. But the absolute gap grew from $4,650 to $6,988 (in 1962 dollars).

So, if income distribution is taken as a crude index of the distribution of occupational skills, responsibilities, and prestige, it also seems fair to conclude that these latter have not been redistributed to any significant extent since 1945. In that case it also follows that the relative size of various social classes has remained essentially unchanged for the past twenty years. Nor is there much prospect of change in the near future.

The importance of this conclusion cannot be overemphasized. If, for example, the relative size of the various classes is taken as fixed, social mobility must be treated as a two-way street. Upward mobility will only be possible if vacancies occur in the higher strata. One reason for such vacancies is that the upper strata are less fertile than society as a whole and do not reproduce themselves. This used to be a major factor in American patterns of mobility, but fertility differentials between classes seem to have gradually narrowed over the years.*

If there is to be appreciable upward mobility, room at the top must be created by downward mobility among the sons and daughters of the elite. Since downward mobility is never pleasant to contemplate, this means that those who believe in equality of opportunity are under powerful ideological pressures to believe that the amount

*It should be noted that virtually all groups more than reproduce themselves in the narrow sense of averaging more than two children per family. But if, say, the upper-middle class included 15 out of every 100 people, and if they produced only 15 children while the remaining 85 people produced 105 children, then the top 15 percent of the next generation would have to include 18 people, at least 3 of whom would have to come from outside the elite of the previous generation.

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of room at the top is expanding, for otherwise their ideal will be hard to fulfill. It also means that the elite, while it may give lip-service to the idea of equalizing opportunity, is under powerful familial pressure to make sure that the opportunities available to its children are somewhat "more equal" than those available to the rest of the population.

Nonetheless, there has been a good deal of social mobility in America. Suppose, for example, that we imagine two alternative occupational systems. In one there is no mobility whatever: everyone inherits his parents' position. In the other there is perfect mobility: children from prosperous, well-placed families have no more chance of ending up in their parents' position than children born in the slums. Every country plainly falls somewhere between these two poles. America, like most industrial societies, falls closer to the equality model than to the hereditary model.* In interpreting this fact, it is important to bear in mind that the genes affecting both physical and mental competence are probably not randomly distributed across classes. Success in America has always depended to some extent on intelligence, and intelligence is to some extent hereditary. While clever parents tend to have children duller than themselves, and dull parents tend to have children cleverer than themselves, the clever parents' children are not typically so dull as the national average, nor are the dull parents' children typically as clever as the average. Thus, even a strictly meritocratic system for allocating class positions would probably put a slightly larger number of advantaged than disadvantaged children in the elite. Uneven distribution of talent cannot account for more than a fraction of all occupational inheritance in America, but it probably does account for some of it.

Like the relative size of social classes, the rate of social mobility does not seem to be changing much, if at all. A man's chances of occupying the same place on the occupational totem pole as his father have not changed significantly in the past forty years, and there is no good reason to suppose they changed much in earlier times.†

Cultural stratification

Up to this point we have been looking at class primarily in economic terms, defining men primarily as producers and consumers of goods and services. One can, however, take a less quantitative and more qualitative view, defining class as a broadly cultural rather than

*The skeptical reader interested in a statistical demonstration of this point is referred to Elton F. Jackson and Harry J. Crockett's "Occupational Mobility in the United States," *American Sociological Review*, February 1964.

†Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan's difficult but enormously important study, *The American Occupational Structure*, shows that the simple correlation between father's and son's occupational status has been stable at 0.4 for sons born in the twentieth century.

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a narrowly economic phenomenon. Marx himself often looked at class this way, but in America this perspective owes more to cultural anthropology than to Marx and his followers.

When Lloyd Warner and his colleagues first began arguing this view in the 1930's, most readers' initial reactions were hostile. Warner's findings conflicted with the mythology of egalitarian pluralism even more sharply than studies of income distribution and occupational hierarchy. It was not that Americans denied the existence of diverse subcultures, but most people were inclined to assume that this diversity was only marginally related to differences in wealth and power.* In part, no doubt, public resistance to such arguments was a legacy of 19th-century America, in which subcultural differences really do seem to have been only loosely associated with wealth and power, at least west of the Appalachians. So long as most men's fathers had been farmers, High Culture remained at a definite discount and even formal education was often rejected in favor of "the school of hard knocks." By the 1930's, however, the situation had changed. It took the conventional wisdom a while to encompass the new reality, but this too has now been largely accomplished. Students, for example, are no longer surprised by Warner's view of small-town America as stratified. On the contrary, they have picked up his views and terms without even having read him, and now casually put their parents down by charging them with "middle-class" prejudices. Newspaper columnists hold forth in the same vein about the characteristics of "lower-class subcultures," and civil rights leaders rail against what they usually take to be an upper-class "power structure."

Nonetheless, cultural classes remain far less egregiously hierarchical than social classes. The time is largely past when the uneducated considered themselves superior to those with "book larnin," but the deference paid to expertise, sophistication, and Culture is still considerably less than in most countries. It is still very difficult, for example, to win political support for subsidies to symphonies, art, ballet, and other manifestations of upper-class taste. Nor does the *nouveau riche* seem as embarrassed by having unfashionable tastes and views as he would be in most European countries. Still, we would argue that American subcultures are more hierarchical than they used to be and that the "lower" cultural strata increasingly defer to the "higher." This means that even those who do not themselves have upper-middle class customs or share upper-middle class concerns nonetheless tend to accept their legitimacy and even their superiority.

*The issue is nicely embodied in the well-known Hemingway-Fitzgerald dialogue, in which Fitzgerald is said to have commented that "The rich are different from us," to which Hemingway replied, "Yes, they have more money." In the 1920's most Americans wanted to believe Hemingway's version; today Fitzgerald's view is more acceptable.

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(The typical voter, for example, does not care for chamber music himself, but he may nonetheless be impressed by it and may have thought better of President Kennedy because he had Casals play at the White House.) One result of this increase in the degree of consensus about the hierarchy of cultural values, assuming it is real, is that upward mobility is increasingly likely to mean cultural as well as socio-economic mobility.

This tendency toward congruence between social and cultural classes has led some sociologists to collapse the two into a single conglomerate conception. There are, however, dangers in this approach. For one thing, it is by no means self-evident that the relationship between social and cultural classes is fixed. What are today described as "middle class values," for example, may tomorrow be found waning among the middle classes but spreading among the working classes. Thus, the fact that the upper-middle class (in terms of income and occupation) is of relatively fixed size does not necessarily mean that what have traditionally been regarded as upper-middle class cultural values are confined to a fixed proportion of population. Many of the values traditionally associated with middle-class status could, for example, depend in large part on absolute living standards rather than relative status, and could be diffused to new groups in the same way that vacuum cleaners and football were. Under these circumstances it would seem useful to make a tentative distinction between social and cultural classes, and to treat their relationship as a problem for investigation rather than as a given.

Education as an index

Such an investigation is not, however, a simple matter. There are, as we have indicated, serious difficulties in assessing the distribution of power between various job holders and consequent difficulties in discussing changes in the size of occupational classes. These difficulties are, however, trivial compared to those we encounter when we try to define cultural classes and to describe their relative size at different points in time. We cannot simply use behavioral indices (e.g., having a savings account or reading a news magazine), for the meaning of these acts varies over time. What were once primarily middle-class habits (e.g., small families and vacations) have in some cases now spread to the working class. The problem is even more serious if we take attitudes (regarding sex, for example) as an index of cultural class, for such attitudes vary from era to era as much as from stratum to stratum.

The impulse to quantify is, however, hard to resist. Just as we earlier took income as a crude measure of occupational power, so too we can take educational attainment as a crude index of cultural class. In doing this, we do not mean to imply a *causal* relationship

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TABLE 3. *Percent of All Individuals Born in Given Years Finishing High School and College, 1855–1944*

Years of Birth	Percent Finishing High School		Percent Finishing 4 Years College	
	Census	USOE	Census	USOE
1855-1859	—	—	—	1.1
1860-1864	11.5	2.5	2.3	—
1865-1869	13.1	—	2.6	1.3
1870-1874	14.2	3.5	2.9	—
1875-1879	16.4	—	3.3	1.7
1880-1884	17.1	6.4	3.4	—
1885-1889	18.5	—	3.8	2.0
1890-1894	20.7	8.8	4.1	—
1895-1899	24.6	—	5.0	2.7
1900-1904	28.5	16.8	6.1	—
1905-1909	34.9	—	7.3	5.8
1910-1914	40.6	29.0	7.4	—
1915-1919	43.4	—	8.1	8.1
1920-1924	54.7	50.8	9.5	—
1925-1929	55.8	—	10.9	—
1930-1934	60.5	59.0	11.0	14.1
1935-1939	63.6	61.1	—	18.2
1940-1944	—	65.1	—	20.0

Sources: The Census estimates for those born prior to 1890 are derived from the 1940 Census, as summarized in John Folger and Charles Nam's Census monograph, *The Education of the American Population*, Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967, Table A. 11. The estimates for those born subsequent to 1890 are derived from the *1960 Census*, I (1), Table 173. Those who report having completed four years of college include some who do not report having earned a degree. To obtain estimates of college degree holders, the figures for those born 1885-94 should be reduced by 20 percent, for those born 1895-1904 by 21 percent, for those born 1905-14 by 15 percent, for those born 1915-24 by 11 percent, and for those born 1925-34 by 10 percent. These discount rates are estimated from Mildred A. Schwartz, *The United States College Educated Population: 1960*, Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, 1965, Table 1.2, and *1960* Census, I (1), Table 173.

The U. S. Office of Education estimates are taken from the 1965 *Digest of Educational Statistics*, Tables 37, 53 and 74. They are based on institutional reports of degrees awarded divided by Census estimates of the total age group. We assumed that the median age of high school graduation was 17, since USOE makes this assumption, and that the median age at college graduation was 22, since the NORC survey of 1961 BA's showed this to be the case. (See James A. Davis, *Great Aspirations*, Chicago, Aldine, 1964. Table 1.1.)

between schooling and cultural level. While schooling may be an instrument for changing men's values, and more especially for disseminating the attitudes and skills which characterize the upper-middle class, evidence of this is by no means definitive. Instead, the

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relationship between schooling and cultural class may often work the other way. Young people's ultimate cultural class may be almost entirely determined by such factors as genetic ability, family structure, social connections, and so forth. Schools and colleges may simply be a sifting device for separating those whose talents and inclinations fit them for one cultural class from those whose talents and inclinations fit them for another. But whatever the cause-effect relationship, there does seem to be a strong *correlation* between educational attainment and cultural class.

On this basis, what can we say about the relative size of various cultural classes? To begin with, it must be said that data on the level and distribution of education before the 1930's are no more reliable than data on incomes before then. Table 3 gives two estimates of the proportion of various age groups completing high school and college, one based on the decennial Census, the other on the biennial institutional surveys by the U.S. Office of Education. It is apparent that, at least for those born before 1915, there is serious disagreement between these two sources. Individuals born before World War I reported receiving far more education than institutions reported giving in this period. Since then the discrepancy has narrowed. This means that institutional reports show a more rapid rate of growth in both high school and college graduation than do individual reports. The discrepancy in growth rates is particularly striking at the high school level, where Census data suggest that the proportion of the population graduating from high school rose by a factor of five between 1880 and 1940, while the USOE data suggest that it rose by a factor of twenty. On the whole we have more confidence in the Census statistics than in those supplied by USOE, but we cannot emphasize too strongly that neither series of statistics should be taken very seriously.

Tabular presentations of data on schooling may, however, conceal as much as they reveal. Table 3, for example, might give many readers an impression of an even, steady increase in both high school and college enrollment. The increase was, however, far from even. Despite growth in enrollment of higher levels, there was very little change in median attainment between the Civil War and World War I. The typical child got between 8 and 9 years of school. There was a sharp increase in median attainment during the 1920's and 1930's to about 12 years. Since World War II median attainment has risen relatively slowly.*

*Much of the increase in attainment in the 1920's and 1930's resulted from more regular progress through school rather than from more protracted schooling. The 1960 Census, I (1), Table 166, shows that between 1920 and 1960 the median school leaving age rose only two years, from 16 to 18. The relevant age groups show a four-year increase in attainment during this same period. This suggests that regular attendance and automatic promotion were crucial ingredients of the apparent change.

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Despite the difficulty of estimating educational attainment for different groups and periods, one thing is clear: the level has risen. This raises the thorny question whether such general increases in attainment have affected the relative size of various cultural classes. If, for example, one were to define the cultural lower-middle class as anyone who had finished high school, and the cultural upper-middle class as anyone who had finished college, both classes would obviously be getting bigger. The lower cultural strata would be shrinking correspondingly. This procedure would clearly be justified if schooling were a primary cause of cultural characteristics. If we knew that the many observable differences between the college-educated and the high-school-educated were a direct consequence of attending college, we could feel fairly confident that the proportion of the population with traditional upper-middle class habits and values had risen in tandem with college enrollment. If, on the other hand, differences between the college-educated and the high-school-educated result largely from the more favored social background, greater intelligence, or more enterprising temperament of those who attend college, then increases in college enrollment may not contribute much to the diffusion of upper-middle class culture, but may simply place the collegiate imprimatur on hitherto marginal groups.

Our own view is that relatively few of the differences between the extensively educated and the briefly educated are caused directly by education per se. Most of the differences seem rather to result from selective withdrawal and ejection from the system. We would argue, in other words, that the differences between college graduates and high school dropouts are only occasionally caused by exposure to high school and college; mostly it is a matter of one sort of person finding high school and college tolerable, and so staying enrolled, while another finds them intolerable and withdraws.

The distribution of schooling

If this assumption is correct, what does it imply about the relationship between the absolute educational attainment of a given generation and the size of cultural classes in that generation? If the colleges' standards of selection were relatively stable over time, an increase in the proportion of young people earning degrees would clearly indicate an increase in the proportion of those who had the traditional upper-middle class virtues – verbal ability, perseverence, willingness to defer gratification, and so forth. This might have nothing to do with what is learned in colleges per se, but might be a result of urbanization, technological change, child rearing practices, the mass media, or other influences – yet it could still be measured by absolute levels of attainment. If, on the other hand, colleges have had no absolute standards, but have mostly graduated anyone willing

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to go through the motions of acquiring education, rising enrollment may not really indicate the growth of the more "sophisticated" cultural strata or a shrinkage of the more "benighted" strata.

Taken as a group, American educational institutions have not set many absolute requirements for entrance or graduation. The increase in high school graduation, for example, has been accomplished in good part by automatic promotion and by the creation of "general" or "basic" curricula which demand almost nothing of the student but persistence and docility. At the same time, however, the level of expectation in the academic curriculum has generally risen – as the spread of advanced placement courses indicates. Whether the net result has been an increase or decrease in average competence we do not know; in either case, however, we suspect that the range of difference among high school graduates has grown. At the college level, there has been, at least until recently, less social and political pressure to accommodate everyone, and the maintainance of traditional upper-middle class norms has been more general and more successful. Indeed, the level of competence required for a BA has probably risen at the same time as the number earning it.

All this takes absolute levels of educational attainment as an index of cultural position. In order to give a more complete view, one must also look at an individual's standing relative to others of his generation. In 1900, for example, a man who completed high school was a member of his generation's educational elite. Most high school graduates of that era seem to have accepted most of the middle-class norms of their time. In 1967, on the other hand, about 75 percent of all young people were finishing high school. Secondary schools were willing to keep all but the most uncooperative students, even if they were not able to live up to middle-class expectations, and high teen-age unemployment made even rebellious youngsters stick around, simply because there were few attractive alternatives. As a result, the fact that a man survived twelve years in school no longer told much if anything about him. By 1967, colleges rather than high schools had become the instruments for separating out the prospective middle classes from the rest.

If we are interested in the changing size of cultural classes, then, we must look not just at absolute levels of schooling but at the distribution of schooling in different eras. We must ask how far it is from the bottom of the ladder to the top, and how the proportion of individuals on various rungs is changing. Table 4 estimates the distribution of schooling for three different generations.

At first glance this distribution looks much more equitable than the distribution of income shown in Table 2. This may, however, be an illusion. For one thing, Table 4 omits women. More important, a year of school does not have the same value under all conditions. The typical suburban school spends more than the typical rural one,

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TABLE 4. *Percentage Shares of Total Years of Schooling Obtained by Best- and Worst-Educated Twentieths and Thirds of U.S. Males, 1875–1934*

Year of Birth	Top 20th	Top Third	Middle Third	Bottom Third	Bottom 20th
1930-34	8	43	35	22	1
1910-14	9	46	34	20	1
1875-1885*	12	53	34	13	†

Source: John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam, *Education of the American Population*, Washington, D.C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967.
*Includes all those alive and over 75 in 1960.
†Less than 0.5 percent.

and the typical college spends more than the typical elementary school. Our crude estimates suggest that the allocation of educational *resources* between various segments of the population is probably almost as inequitable as the income distribution. On the other hand, there is strong reason to doubt that there is anywhere nearly as much variation in what students learn as in the amounts spent on their education. A year of graduate school may cost ten times more than a year of elementary school, but an extra year of graduate school does not increase either a man's intellectual competence or his future income ten times as much as an extra year of elementary school. Thus, while Table 3 probably underestimates the inequalities in the distribution of schooling, a table showing the distribution of educational expenditures would overestimate these inequalities.

Whatever the absolute degree of inequality, it may be less important than the trend. Table 4 shows that if we imputed equal value to all years of schooling, regardless of what was spent on them, the trend was toward a more equal distribution. This would be even more true if we were to look at the distribution of days of schooling instead of years, for variations in lengths of school year and regularity of attendance have dropped sharply in recent times. It should also be borne in mind, however, that, just as with incomes, the rise in absolute attainment from one generation to another means that it takes a very considerable redistribution to prevent the absolute gap between the best and worst educated from growing. The absolute gap between the best and worst educated thirds, for example, widened from 5.8 to 7.0 years between the 1910–1914 generation and the 1930–1934 generation, even though the distribution of schooling had grown more equal.

Nor does the trend in the distribution of educational resources necessarily parallel the trend in the distribution of years of school. It is true that the expenditure differences among regions and jurisdictions are narrowing, so that eight years of elementary schooling or four years of high school have more nearly the same value for every-

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one. But a year of higher education is much more expensive than a year of either elementary or secondary education. As a result, a one year variation in the amount of college a man gets will affect the distribution of educational resources as much as a two or three year variation in the number of years of elementary or secondary school.* Our best guess is that the distribution of educational resources has changed relatively little in recent years.

Cultural and social stratification compared

If the level of educational attainment is rising, while the distribution of educational resources remains relatively stable, what about intergenerational mobility? Are children from poorly educated families more or less likely to end up with a poor education today than in the past? If we judge cultural class by how long an individual has been in school, are upward and downward cultural mobility becoming more or less common?

The best available data suggest that a man's overall chances of improving on his father's position on the educational ladder has not changed significantly over the past forty years. But this fact is the gross result of two contrary trends. On the one hand, there seems to be somewhat more mobility in the middle of the educational distribution. On the other hand, there seems to be less at the top. If, for example, we rank men in quartiles according to the education of their fathers, we can make a crude estimate of educational mobility by looking at how many men born in the top quartile end up in the top quartile themselves. The greater the percentage of those who do so, the less room there is at the top. We find that among men born between 1927 and 1936, 49 percent of those who started in the top quartile remained there. Among men who had been born in the top quartile between 1897 and 1906, only 42 percent had remained there. This is not a dramatic change, but it certainly offers no support for the usual comfortable assumption that educational opportunity is becoming more equal.

On the basis of the evidence on educational attainment just re-

*If, for example, A gets four years of elementary education and B gets eight, B has gotten 100 percent more years of schooling than A and has absorbed about 100 percent more resources. If A's grandson gets 12 years of education while B's grandson get 18 years, B's family advantage has been reduced from 100 percent to 50 percent and the distribution of years of school has grown more equitable. Yet if we assume that a year of high school costs 1.5 times as much as a year of elementary school, that a year of college costs three times as much, and that a year of graduate school costs ten times as much, B's grandson will consume 228 percent more resources than A's grandson. Thus while a change of this sort would make the distribution shown in Table 4 look more equal than before, it would make a distribution based on resource allocation look less equal.

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viewed, it seems clear that cultural stratification follows many of the same patterns as social stratification:

1. The overall level of educational attainment seems to be rising, just as the overall income level is. The overall level of cultural sophistication is probably also rising, though not at anything like the same rate as the standard of living.
2. The distribution of years of schooling is more equal than the distribution of income, and unlike the income distribution is moving toward greater equality. The absolute attainment gap between the well educated and the poorly educated is growing, however, just as the absolute income gap between rich and poor is growing.
3. The distribution of educational resources, like the distribution of income, does not seem to be getting notably more or less egalitarian. What this implies for the distribution of intellectual competence is debatable, however, just as it is debatable whether a stable distribution of income indicates a stable distribution of occupational power and responsibility.
4. The rate of intergenerational mobility between cultural classes seems to resemble the rate of social mobility in that both are quite high and neither has changed significantly in the twentieth century.

Social and cultural classes compared

Under these circumstances we must ask to what extent social and cultural classes are really identical. While there is considerable overlap, it is by no means complete. Those with "upper-middle" educations are by no means always "upper-middle" in occupation or income, and those with "lower" incomes and occupations are by no means always "lower" in educational attainment. In 1960, for example, 18 percent of the male labor force over 25 years old had completed at least one year of college. Only 45 percent of this educational elite were in the best paid fifth of the male work force; 25 percent were earning less than the national median. At the other end of the educational scale, 24 percent of the male labor force had not completed elementary school. Yet 21 percent of these semi-literates were earning more than the national median, and 5 percent were in the best paid fifth of the labor force.

Neither is the relationship between education and occupation as tight as many people suppose. It is true that in 1960 some 76 percent of all men over 25 in "professional, technical, and kindred" occupations reported a year or more of college, and about half held BA's. But only 35 percent of all male "managers, officials, and proprietors" had ever been to college, and only 15 percent held BA's. (Even if we exclude proprietors and include only salaried managers and officials,

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only 45 percent had finished a year of college.) Putting this the other way round: a man over 25 who had finished a year of college in 1960 had three chances in five of holding a professional or managerial job, but he also had one chance in six of holding a clerical or sales job and one chance in six of holding a blue-collar job.

While these relationships are all relatively loose, they are obviously not inconsequential. This becomes especially clear if, instead of looking at the relationship between only two of these hierarchies, we look at all three together. Taking men between 25 and 34 in 1960, for example, and then focusing on those in *both* the best paid fifth of the income distribution and the most prestigious fifth of the occupational distribution, we find that 68 percent are also in the best educated fifth of the male population. This suggests considerable overlap in America's economic, occupational, and cultural elites.

The most interesting point about all these relationships may not, however, be their absolute level but their trend. The overall relationship between education and occupational status has not changed much over the years, though earning a BA may be relatively more important while a high school diploma may be relatively less so. The relationship between education and income also seems to be fairly stable. The relationship between educational attainment and social mobility, while rather modest, also seems stable.

Loose as these relationships may be, their existence and persistence bring us back to the problem we raised earlier: namely, the character of the relationship between social and cultural class. Viewed from the top, the problem seems simple. There seem to be plenty of opportunities for those with appropriate skills, habits, and attitudes; the "problem" is the shortage of qualified men for available top-level jobs. The educational system is constantly criticized for not turning out enough men competent to fill these slots. Those at the top mostly assume that it is the difficulty of recruiting into their own cultural class which poses the crucial obstacle to both social progress and individual mobility. Hence their support for "more" and "better" education.

Viewed from the bottom, on the other hand, the situation looks very different. Employers seem to demand all sorts of irrelevant qualifications from applicants, and many fear that even if they meet these requirements they will not be allowed to climb very far. From the bottom, then, the main obstacle to upward mobility often appears to be the limited amount of room at the top, not the cultural characteristics of those at the bottom. To the extent that this is true, schooling and other invitations to character change depend for their success on convincing those involved that they are in fact headed for jobs and social milieus in which new habits and values will be both necessary and appropriate. This is often impossible. The excluded are constantly told they can be included if only they buy a new beauty

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cream, win at the races, do well in school, or whatever. They are rightly cynical, even though endlessly gullible. The changes required for success in school and for upward cultural mobility are painful, and skeptics are seldom willing to take the risks involved. Indeed, even the nonskeptic who takes the elite's claims at face value and believes he could get ahead by changing may be unwilling to do so, for he may feel that the material and psychic rewards are not worth the price of estrangement from family, friends, and childhood self.

The function of schooling

All this suggests a partial answer to another question we raised earlier: namely, how much of the difference between the uneducated and the educated should be attributed directly to school experiences and how much to external factors such as upbringing, intelligence, personality. A good portion of the apparent impact of schooling is, we would suggest, *anticipatory socialization.* Sending a child to school may be like telling him he has a rich maiden aunt and will eventually inherit a fortune. The aunt and her money have no direct effect on the child's life or growth. But the *idea* of the money — even if it is nonexistent — may have a considerable effect, for the child may feel he has special opportunities and responsibilities. So, too, with schooling. What actually happens from day to day in a school or college may have relatively little effect on the students — though it certainly has *some* effect. But a good student's knowledge that he can go to college, and that a college degree will be a passport to a good job and a comfortable standard of living, may have a significant effect on him. He is more likely to adopt the attitudes and acquire the skills he thinks he will need in the world he expects to enter. That he may not really be able to enter this world may be irrelevant at this stage, just as the actual terms of his aunt's will are.

This becomes critically important when we consider the possible impact on the overall social structure of equalizing educational opportunities and/or results. Suppose, to take an extreme example, that all students stayed in school precisely the same length of time. Employers interested in getting the most "suitable" students would then presumably rely on school grades to separate sheep from goats. Students would come to anticipate this, and would therefore be able to tell quite early what kinds of jobs and living standards were open to them. Most of those who knew they were going to have menial jobs and low incomes would sense that adults viewed them as failures and would probably begin to protect themselves psychologically from this eventuality by adopting something very like the current lower-class cultural style. Most of those who were going to have important jobs and live well would, on the other hand, sense that adults saw them as successes and would adapt themselves to the real

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or imagined requirements of this role. Such differentiation would occur even if all students attended the same schools for the same length of time, took the same courses with the same teachers, etc.

This fantasy suggests that the effects of schooling may depend as much on how well the student feels he is doing as on how long he stays enrolled. The apparent correlation between educational attainment and adult values is, in other words, at least partially due to the fact that high attainment is a surrogate for success (first in school itself and later in adult life). To the degree that this is so, neither expansion of schools and colleges, nor increases in the average length of schooling, nor even increases in the average academic competence of the population, will have much effect on the cultural characteristics of the adult population, for these measures will not affect people's sense of their own success or failure relative to others around them. These perceptions will be affected only by changes in the distribution of wealth and power among adults and, as we have seen, this distribution does not seem to be changing much at the present time.

Yet this is not quite the whole story. For one thing, while students tend to compare themselves to their contemporaries and adapt their personalities accordingly, they also compare themselves to their parents and respond to this comparison. If students feel they know more and are doing better than their parents did, this may give them self-confidence and a general sense of well-being even when their relative position vis-à-vis their agemates is identical to that of their parents among their contemporaries. In addition, it seems likely that schools and colleges do have some direct effect on the habits and values of those who pass through them, independent of the later fate of these youngsters. This is probably especially true in the younger grades.

Finally, it must be noted that there are a variety of other educational institutions, such as television and churches, working to change the customs and concerns of the American people.

All in all, it seems safe to conclude that the recent stability of the income distribution indicates a high degree of stability in the size of social classes and that this stability means considerable stability in the size of cultural classes. There may nonetheless be *some* changes in the latter. These changes are extremely difficult to describe in single summary measures comparable to income, but the evidence available from opinion surveys, consumer research, and the like suggests that there is a slow growth in the number of people having what have traditionally been called middle-class attitudes and tastes. Yet even here the most conspicuous fact is that the enormous rise in the standard of living over the past two decades has brought relatively few of the changes in basic values that the prophets of affluence predicted.

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Rethinking our social strategies

ROBERT A. LEVINE

As one reflects on the troubled history of the "war on poverty" and other social programs of the Great Society, it becomes clear that the problem is not so much the nature of the programs as it is difficulties of administration. What has been happening, in fact, is that new goals and new programs are proliferating faster than improvements in administrative procedures. More dismaying, they are increasing far faster than the number of competent administrators and planners. This proves that good ideas are relatively easy to come by but are not easily incarnated in workable programs – especially large programs involving millions of people.

Given the fact that we do not want to abandon the goals, what we have to do is to design a system which is sensitive to defects in administration – a system which is likely to work even with imperfect planning and less than perfect managers. What this may mean is that a substantial portion of the *operation* of the Great Society programs could be turned over to private organizations and local communities, while *policy guidance* and the setting of conditions which will bring private and local operators to operate in the interests of public policy remain in the hands of the national government. If "creative federalism" has any meaning, it should proceed by this kind of division of labor.

II

To some extent, "creative federalism" has been confused with decentralization. In fact, even for many liberals decentralization has

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become a new slogan, if not a new panacea. But the problem is not decentralization as such, but the kinds of incentives one can offer people and institutions to carry out programs which are socially desirable. The argument has been made that decentralized operations move decision-making closer to the place where decisions are applied. It implies that such decisions will be more responsive to particular conditions and cases. But this is not always so. Some of the worst bureaucratic systems are the most decentralized. A major problem with the Public Assistance structure, for example, is that decisions are made by the caseworker, case by case, and often in quite arbitrary fashion.

Nor is there much of a case for simply turning over federal programs or federal funds to the states. Some states simply might not be interested in going along with a policy, even if this policy is approved by a national majority. Categorical grants of federal funds, giving the states wide discretion so long as they use the money for designated purposes, may be possible for certain limited areas, as in education; but block grants for purposes as broad as getting rid of poverty, for example, will be relatively ineffective in states which are not terribly interested in getting rid of poverty – and these are by and large the poorest states.

The key, then, may be not decentralization as such, but the design of a system in which people make decisions for themselves in their own best interests, but in which the sum total comes out as a net increment to the social good – something like Adam Smith's "invisible hand." And if incentives or rules can be designed to induce the many "prime movers" in business, the states, and the localities to move in the same socially desirable direction at the same time, the cumulative impact of this movement would surely be greater than the power of the federal government to accomplish the same ends by administrative means.

III

In considering the Great Society programs, let us distinguish two approaches which we shall call simply *the more* and *the less* administrative approach. Both require national planning, because the results have to be aggregated to national levels. But they diverge substantially in the way they are carried out.

The highly administrative approach is one in which programs are planned in detail. A master plan sets forth the levels of programs, this is supplemented by subordinate plans, and these in turn are supplemented by plans at the operating level – in industries, plants, states, cities, school districts, local communities, etc. All these plans must be coordinated with one another to insure consistency. And all this takes many planners – probably more than are available, cer-

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tainly far more than can be used economically, given other demands on planning capabilities.

The less administrative approach sets general rules to guide decisions, and then counts on existing "natural" economic and social forces – such as market conditions, incentives, and bargaining power – for their execution.

By and large, those programs which have stressed detailed planning and detailed administration have either not worked, or have worked only on a scale which was very small compared to the size of the problem. Consider the following examples of the highly administrative approach:

The National Recovery Administration. Probably the most detailed and comprehensive attempt to make the economy work by elaborate plans and rules was the NRA, initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. Under the NRA, each industry was to prepare compendious structural, operating, and pricing plans which were to be ratified by the federal government. Until NRA was declared unconstitutional in 1935, it attempted to do just that. Its major impact on American economic and social policy was Section 7A, which was translated into the National Labor Relations Act. But in no other respect did the detailed regulation of prices and market policy work at all.

Price Control and Rationing. These devices, during the Second World War, undoubtedly did keep price levels below where they would otherwise have been (given the other policies of the time); but the exigencies of detailed administration encouraged such abuse that the whole system became completely unworkable after the end of the war.

Public Assistance. Public assistance, which started out with high hopes of designing aid to fit individual needs in the 1930's, has become a brutal system of degrading investigation and "big brotherism," as well-meaning social workers have tried to apply detailed rules to individual cases.

Public Housing. Public housing has created and perpetuated ghettoes, while replacing old slums with new ones. The major reason for this is that the designers of public housing would not – *and could not* – think through all the implications of their carefully planned ideas.

MDTA Training. Training under the Manpower Development Training Act has worked in many cases to retrain those affected by structural economic change, and in fewer cases to give initial training to those needing basic skills. But because it has depended on a detailed system of negotiating the setting up of institutional courses and On-the-Job-Training slots, it has had to remain quite small relative to existing needs. There are simply not enough administrators to set up the number of small projects adequate to reach a major portion of

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those in greatest need with the types of programs that they require.

By contrast, the examples of the less administrative approach – the setting of general rules within which people can move freely in their own interest – show substantially more success. For example:

Fiscal and Monetary Policy. There can be little doubt that the sophisticated use of fiscal and monetary policy in ironing out economic fluctuations has worked far better than the price control – wage control – rationing systems of wartime. By controlling the aggregate demands on the economy, but allowing millions of individuals to "reallocate" their own choices, fiscal and monetary policy have been able to maintain prosperity with sufficient price stability.

The Income Tax. The income tax system, with all its loopholes and abuses, is an effective way of collecting revenue by setting general rules, and allowing people to apply them to themselves. To the extent that the system has not worked, it has been because of the many specific exceptions written into the law, and – in the case of higher incomes – because of the move toward an "administered" system. The income tax system shines particularly in contrast with the local property tax systems, which have depended upon detailed administration – individual assessment by external authority – and which have been badly abused and have provided insufficient revenues.

The NLRB. Finally, there is the National Labor Relations Board, which illustrates either the difficulties of the more administrative approach or the advantages of the less administrative, depending upon what one considers its major objective to be. The Wagner Act set up an administrative system to enforce industrial justice. This worked moderately well, but was subject to substantial abuse because of its detailed administrative rulings. As a result, it was drastically amended by the Taft-Hartley Act of 1948, which complicated the administrative system considerably. As administrative attempts to deliver justice, both laws were mixed in their effects. But as attempts to change the structure of industry by changing the rules of collective bargaining in the marketplace, they were outstandingly successful. For the laws pushed the parties to set the conditions of a "just" bargain between themselves, rather than laying down the outlines of a "just" (or "unjust") contract by government fiat. They did affect the outcome of the bargain, but only by shifting the balance of bargaining power – Wagner toward labor and Taft-Hartley toward business.

These contrasting set of examples argue strongly and pragmatically for the more general approach. The detailed administrative approach does not work for clear enough reasons – which start with the impossibility of writing detailed rules to fit every case, and end

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with the lack of highly trained people to administer every case, assuming even that an administrative solution is possible.*

Let us consider then, the characteristics of a less administrative approach to current problems:

1. Programs should be wholesale rather than retail. Public administrators should not set up many small carefully-designed programs; individual "operators," large and small, should be encouraged to set up programs which conform to the general rules.
2. Programs must provide incentives for such operators to set up individual programs in their own self-interest. Indeed, such incentives for individuals to do voluntarily what is socially desirable is central to any general system.
3. These incentives should work largely through the market. This does not mean that business enterprise is in some sense superior to public officialdom. On the contrary: the advantage of working through the marketplace is that you don't need superior people and superior plans to achieve your goal.
4. The "market" need not be understood merely as the competitive market of classical economics. The concept of the market here is a broad one, which includes the "bargaining markets" discussed by John Kenneth Galbraith as well as the "trading markets" discussed in standard economic texts. A very powerful tool which can be used by government is to set up conditions which strengthen the bargaining power of designated groups, as was the case with the trade unions under the Wagner Act.

As to the kind of rules necessary for operation:

1. They should be, as far as possible, self-applied rules. As with the rules of the income tax system, they should be set up in a way which makes it reasonable to expect that people will apply these rules to themselves. Self-applied rules are doubtless subject to abuse; the self-employed evade taxes more frequently than do those whose income is withheld by their employers. But the alternative of detailed snooping is worse than a certain amount of tax evasion.

*Some counterarguments however, should not be ignored. The less administrative approach may have all too visible "wastage." A historical example of this comes from the land grant system of encouraging railroad building in the last half of the 19th century. Huge profits were made at the public expense – but the railroads were built. One argument against income maintenance programs is that some people will "abuse" the system by sitting on their porches and living on the dole when they "should" be working. And they might. The question is whether these abuses are more or less tolerable than the alternative – a system of detailed investigation of the public assistance type.

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2. In order to minimize abuses, the general rules will have to be enforced – but they can be enforced as the tax rules are, by exception. That is, we assume that most people comply, and we check up only on a random sample basis. Together with strong penalties for noncompliance, such a system keeps the tax system workable.

3. Rules are more workable if they are of the "don't" variety rather than of the "do" variety. Individuals will more readily tolerate rules – or limits – on what they can't do than specific directions on what they have to do. An example here – a perverse one – is the recent political failure of many open housing laws. Although these laws are essentially of the "don't" variety, the campaigns against them have been cleverly designed to make them appear as "do" laws. The open-housing opponents have contended that such laws would force people to sell or rent homes to others chosen by the government. This charge is false – the laws are "don't" laws preventing a certain kind of behavior rather than directing another kind – but the proponents of open housing have not been able to make this clear.

Finally, an additional characteristic of a general system is that where sophisticated and detailed rules are necessary, these should apply to a small group of controlling interests, rather than to the populace at large. Monetary policy, for example, does not limit what any single individual can spend, but its operation does depend in part upon a detailed set of rules applied to a sophisticated set of people, the bankers. Where necessary, strategic groups can be singled out for detailed application of rules, but this should be the exception.

IV

The setbacks of the War on Poverty arise, in part, from the difficulties of applying a specific and administered program to more than 30 million poor individuals.* The resources of welfare workers, teachers, trainers, community organizers, have been insufficient. The funds have also been limited.

Had vastly larger sums been available, the distinctions between more and less administered programs would have tended to disappear, simply because it would have become possible to overwhelm the problem of poverty with waves of money. This is the story of

*It should be made clear that the War on Poverty and the programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity are not identical. The funds budgeted for OEO, about $2 billion, form less than 10 percent of the total $25 billion requested for the War on Poverty with the remainder ranging from education to old age assistance. Many rules discussed here have already been applied to OEO programs as such, particularly in the Community Action area.

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American defense policy. What if billions are spent on programs which would be considered "wasteful" by the standards applied to the War on Poverty? The remaining billions still buy an awful lot of defense.

Lacking such sums, however, what we might be able to achieve is a long-run redesign of the Poverty Program to reduce the amount of detailed administration, and to provide more incentives for individuals to develop their own programs.

Such a redesign would begin not with a specific service-providing program, but with a specific application of a general principle relevant to any program. Public decisions in the United States are arrived at in large measure by a political bargaining process, and one reason for the past lack of services of all sorts to the poor has been their weakness in this bargaining process. The influence of the poor has not been felt in the education process, therefore poverty-area schools have been treated poorly; the poor have not been felt in legal circles, therefore justice for the poor has been unequal; and so forth. Typically, until recently, the constituents of any government agency consisted of its clientele and its own bureaucracy. Since the poor were not the major clientele of any agency, their bargaining power was negligible. The creation of an independent anti-poverty agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Community Action Agencies, which are its analogs at the local level, has begun to change this situation. An independent agency, with the poor as its sole clientele, and with a bureaucracy which is still relatively new and idealistic, is a *sine qua non* of an effective war on poverty. Hopefully, as the bureaucracy hardens with age (as it inevitably will) the bargaining power of the poor themselves will increase to the point where the additional bargaining power of the new bureaucracy will not be necessary. Until that time – and it has not yet been reached – independent poverty agencies at the national and at the local levels, with their independence maintained through independent sources of funding, are essential.

The service-delivery programs of the War on Poverty are divisible into four major categories: job programs; individual improvement programs, primarily educational; community betterment programs; and income maintenance. This is how they might be redesigned:

1. *Jobs.* A tight economy, providing jobs for anyone who can be trained, is essential to any anti-poverty program. Given this, more training and better provision for those who cannot be trained are needed. Instead of a training program which depends upon specific small-scale projects and which is never likely to reach the bulk of those in need, we should encourage business through profit incentives, as well as through exhortation.

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(a) Such programs have been rejected in the past because, in addition to subsidizing training, they provide a direct subsidy to business. Nevertheless, such a subsidy seems to be the only way to provide enough training really to reach the population in need. To distinguish this from proposals to subsidize training in general through a tax credit, the subsidy should be confined to trainees who declare themselves poor by affidavit, who have inferior employment records, or who otherwise can be identified by a simple system. Broad training programs, not focused specifically on the poor, we have found, help the poor but little. A variation on the subsidy theme might be a training insurance program, to insure those firms who train the poor against losses due to turnover of trainees before the company has had its training investment returned.

(b) A general "mobility subsidy," workable through tax credits, should be given to anyone moving to take a new job. Rather than the current types of experimental mobility programs, which use a social-work approach – taking someone in a depressed area by the hand and leading him to a skill-shortage area – these would be simple but substantial money allowances to people who move. Money would inevitably be provided to those who don't need it and who would have moved anyway; but the alternatives are either the program remaining far too small or a vast bureaucratic organization.

(c) A public employment program for those who could not get jobs any other way. A substantial portion of the hard-core poor are not likely to be able to get jobs in the competitive market *even after absorbing all the training they can.* A public job is a preferable alternative to income maintenance for those who can work and need work for their own self-respect. Such a proposal – that the government be the "employer of last resort" – was made last year by the President's Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress. It found that more than five million useful jobs – in schools, museums, hospitals, and parks – could be filled if the money were made available to these institutions. Under this system, the government would not "employ" the poor, but make the monies available to nonprofit public institutions to do so.

What we are eliminating here are all the current anti-poverty training programs which have been laboriously negotiated, employer by employer, and substituting for them broad financial incentives for training and mobility. The one

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detailed program which might be retained is the small-scale, high quality program such as the Job Corps, which has been shown by cost-benefit analysis to work; such a program is directed at a crucial target and group – eligible boys number no more than 200,000 at a given time.

2. *Individual Improvement – Education.* We do not really know how to aid the poor educationally. This is not to say that we should not continue to experiment. But the payoff is likely to be very long in coming. Two general programs are suggested.

   (a) A substantial expansion of federal funding for slum schools. Whatever else they need, most school systems need much more money to do anything for the underprivileged. Such funds might be provided through the broad unstructured approach of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; or they might be provided by the "Follow-Through" approach, in which kids who have been in Head Start get additional aid in their early school years. The latter has the virtue of reinforcing the gains which Head Start has already demonstrated it can bring about. In any case, however, the real payoff may be a generalized "Hawthorne" effect wherein the schools, children, and teachers all improve because they know the nation as a whole is interested and committed. This commitment, however, must continue to be expressed by directing such broad aid toward poor children and their schools, as Title I now does, rather than diluting the commitment by a program of general federal aid to all schools, rich and poor.

   (b) Parallel to this, in higher education, would be a GI Bill type of scholarship program. Unlike the GI bill, this would be limited to those with low incomes, but it should apply to all those capable of doing college work.

   The major change here is in the de-emphasis of the search for the "right" educational program which will solve all of the educational deficiencies of the poor. We do not abandon evaluation of alternatives, but we do abandon the effort to direct the money in the "precisely right" direction, concentrating instead on the task – difficult enough – of simply teaching the poor.

3. *Community Improvement.* This portion of the program would be redesigned in the following respects:

   (a) In the housing field, we want to provide more and better housing, and to desegregate. The first objective could be achieved by substantial incentives to private business to build better housing for the poor. The current "turnkey" pilot projects in which public housing is built by private firms, who

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then turn the key over to public housing authorities provide an example. As to desegregation, there is little doubt that compulsory open housing has slowed down. We should still seek open housing laws, but failing that we can seek legislation compelling realtors and commercial sellers to deal on a nondiscriminating basis. (Such an approach to the realtor is an example of a measure applied to a small group of controlling interests, rather than one applied to the entire population.) This approach would substitute for massive public housing projects – which have not worked well in providing decent housing and not at all in ending desegregation – for urban renewal, and for detailed "planned growth" (which still seems to mean Negro removal).

(b) A major part of the War on Poverty has been, and should continue to be, the creation of self-controlled and self-directed community institutions among the poor. A continued and expanded neighborhood center program could bring people and services together, and create the "nodes" around which community institutions could be built. Such a concentration could avoid the dilemma inherent in current programs which give the appearance of using federal money for the direct creation of new local political power groups. Political power is implicit in such organization, but so far as federal programs are concerned, it should remain implicit. Such institutions and such political power constitute "black power" in the constructive, self-help, coalition-politics sense.

(c) Legal programs to help the poor understand their rights.

(d) Health programs would be created around the neighborhood center, by holding out financial incentives for doctors, nurses, technicians, etc. to enter the center.

(e) Family planning programs, making information and devices available to whoever wants and needs them.

4. *Income Maintenance.* In our nonbureaucratic program there would be an income maintenance program of the negative income tax or family allowance type. This may be the single most important part of the program. For half or more of poor families, work opportunity has little meaning; the family head is usually aged or disabled or a woman, or suffers from some disability or other. Yet a simple system of income maintenance for these families can mean opportunity for their children. The same is true for the children of families of the working poor. Money helps. But current public assistance systems are spotty, cover only a quarter of the poor, and discourage work

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> incentives by taking away a dollar of assistance for a dollar earned. They represent the worst in highly administered systems, from the investigation of the "man in the house" to the social worker's decision about whether the family should or should not buy a new blanket. What is needed is a national income maintenance system — a system which covers all the poor, one which works by simple affidavit (enforced, as are the income tax laws, by exception), which separates services from income maintenance, and above all allows retention of part of earnings, as an incentive to earn and thus get off welfare. Working through the tax system or the social security system, it could substitute rules for administration, and simplicity for insane complexity.

What is being suggested is a "liberal" program in that it works for the abolition of poverty. But it is "conservative" in that it seeks to do this largely by financial incentives and avoiding as much as possible detailed administration. From 1933 to 1940, the social needs of this country were so great that almost any program could prove effective. From 1940 to 1960, there were few new social programs, but the general progress of the economy achieved many of the social goals of the time. In 1960 and 1964 the country resolved to clean up many of the residual social problems left over in a prosperous economy — but we are now witnessing a reaction against the administration of such programs. Perhaps we can continue to move toward the same goals, but to do so in a way which is more agreeable to the still powerful urge of Americans toward individual liberty.

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REVIEW ESSAY

To Suburbia, with Love

MARVIN BRESSLER

For a decade following World War II, academic sociology, followed quickly by its vulgate tongue, middle-brow journalism, had an ingenuous view of suburbia which was summed up in such reproachful terms as "homogeneity," "conformity," "conservatism," "matriarchy," "rootless," "status striving," etc. It was the perspective derived from John R. Seeley and his colleagues in *Crestwood Heights*, a study of the Toronto area. It was the image given widespread currency by William H. Whyte in his description of Park Forest, Illinois, in *The Organization Man*.

Sociologists were, however, not altogether displeased by the reported transformation of American communal life. They regarded suburbia with the pardonable ambivalence of men who perceived that what is bad for the country might very well be good for social science. As intellectuals, they were, needless to say, obliged to deplore the vulgar and constricted life styles of the new bourgeoisie. But as professional researchers, they celebrated the increase in sociological power which was gained by adding an analytical refinement to the existing distinctions between "urban" and "rural" social types. The term "suburban" seemed to satisfy the criteria necessary to admit a concept to sociological usage. It had empirically distinguishable and logically independent referents (suburban residents were happily both identifiable and different); it could account for much of the systematic variation in social behavior (child-rearing practices, crime rates, political action, religious observances, aesthetic preferences, etc.); and it was helpful in anticipating the future (a simple projection of existing trends would, for example, provide foreknowledge of the impending total conquest of rugged individualism by the "social ethic").

The pretensions of the suburban concept were, however, almost immediately challenged by a second wave of studies. These suggested that limited findings in a few communities had been prematurely elevated into universal generalizations. A number of careful

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British and American investigations such as Michael Young and Peter Willmott's *Family and Class in a London Suburb* and Bennett Berger's *Working Class Suburb* suggested that the "Park Forest syndrome" was not an intrinsic feature of suburban life, but only of a specific sector of the aspiring middle class. People bring to the surburbs the material, intellectual, spiritual, and political furniture of their previous residences. The spatial fact of living between an urban and rural locale does not necessarily produce anything uniform, monolithic, distinctive, or distinguishable.

Herbert Gans's *The Levittowners* (Pantheon Books), a study of the New Jersey development, is the latest work that supports this "revisionist" thesis. But it is also a vastly more ambitious study than any of its predecessors. It is at once a large-scale empirical study, a political treatise, and a primer for planners. Coming from a sociologist who has been strongly identified with liberal movements, and whose previous study of displaced Italians in a Boston slum (*The Urban Villagers*) won widespread commendation, this book is likely to make a significant impact on sociological thinking.

THE author's major substantive findings can be readily summarized in his own words:

1. "Perhaps the most significant fact about the origin of a new community is that it is not new at all, but only a new physical site on which people develop conventional institutions with traditional programs. New towns are ultimately old communities on new land, culturally not significantly different from suburban subdivisions and urban neighborhoods inhabited by the same kinds of people, and politically much like other small towns."

2. "Most new suburbanites are pleased with the community that develops: they enjoy the house and outdoor living and take pleasure from the large supply of compatible people, without experiencing the boredom or malaise ascribed to suburban homogeneity . . . People's lives are changed somewhat by the move to suburbia, but their basic ways remain the same; they do not develop new life styles or ambitions for themselves and their children."

3. "The sources or causes of change are not to be found in suburbia per se, but in the new house, the opportunity for home ownership, and above all, the population mix – the people with whom one now lives."

4. "The politics of a new suburb is no more distinctive than the rest of its life. In any heterogeneous community, conflicting demands from the voters force the decision-makers to set up a performing government which observes democratic norms [while] freeing them to reconcile these conflicts in a backstage actual government."

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The grand conclusion, then, is that suburban residence, as such, has limited sovereignty over people's lives, and the effects it produces tend to be benign. Gans does observe that Levittown lacks adequate public transportation, that its upper-middle-class minority is often sorely aggrieved, that women may feel that they are "stuck," and that adolescents regard the community as "Endsville." However, many of these sources of discontent are endemic in American society, others can be easily remedied by a modest allocation of additional resources, and still others, such as the "youth problem," require greater adult understanding of generational subcultural differences.

THERE are, actually, substantial limitations to the empirical results. Because of limited funds, the quantitative analysis of questionnaires and interviews which support some of the principal generalizations tends to be somewhat primitive. Sampling defects – women, young people, the more affluent and better educated persons were consistently over-represented – restricted the application of routine tests of statistical significance. The intention of the longitudinal research design, whose purpose was to elicit changes over time, was compromised in at least one group by requiring the respondents to recall their previous feelings, rather than eliciting their reactions before they moved to Levittown. Accordingly, most of what is empirically valuable in *The Levittowners* is derived from the author's three-year (1958-61) immersion as a "participant-observer," a role that combines the sensibility of the sociologist, the technical competencies of the cultural anthropologist, and the tenacity of the journalist.

There is no method in social science that is more admirably suited for generating hypotheses and none less equipped to confirm them. In the absence of formal criteria of validity, our will to believe depends on our own prior leanings, on such intangibles as "the ring of authenticity," and, ultimately, on our faith in the credibility of the observer. Gans's chief virtue as a participant-observer is a quality of mind and personality that allows him to view suburbia from the perspective of those observed, that is to say the working and lower middle-class residents that comprise most of Levittown's population. He is thoroughly unobtrusive – perhaps because he is, as he says, "shy"; although he cannot quite forswear establishing his credentials as a "city-lover," he does not otherwise assert any of the ethnocentric biases of the academic intellectual. Just as an anthropologist may develop a proprietary affection for his tribe, so does Gans protect his Levittowners against all their traducers.

A man more given to irony might have enlivened his volume by scoring some cheap verbal victories over the Philistines but at the expense of his scholarly integrity. My own twelve-year residence in Levittown (Pennsylvania) persuades me that Gans must have been

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sorely tempted. For example, it would be easy to make sport of the abortive movement sponsored by the relatively affluent residents of the $18,000 "Country Club" houses – with sizable mortgages to match – to rid themselves of the "Levittown image" by changing its name to "Camelot." (Indeed, one social scientist in the area promptly dispatched a communiqué to the local press inquiring if, all things considered, "Owe-alot" might not be an even more appropriate alias.) The successful restoration of the New Jersey Levittown to its original name of Willingboro was prompted by similar status anxieties, a fact which Gans records with his customary disciplined respect for guileless human motives. In short, any community lends itself to satire or sober analysis; a less scrupulous scholar might have written a more urbane and less revealing book.

GANS's orientation to suburbia is perhaps best exemplified by his analysis of "conformity" and "homogenization," the archtypical villains of the anti-suburban critique. Conformity is sometimes discussed as if the many were by definition loathsome, and only resistance could redeem the few. Since Levittowners are thus rendered morally vulnerable, Gans is moved to plead "not guilty" in their behalf. The burden of his message is that the indictment has been carelessly drawn. "If one distinguishes *wanted* conformity, as when neighbors learn from each other and share ideas; *tolerated* conformity, when they adjust their own standards in order to maintain friendly relations; and *unwanted* conformity, when they bow to pressure and give up their individuality, only the last is clearly undesirable, and in Levittown it is rare. Tolerated conformity requires some surrender of autonomy, but I can see why Levittowners feel it is more important to be friendly with one's neighbors than to insist on individual but unpopular ways of fixing up the outside of the house."

Clearly, the make-up of the community influences the "conformity-autonomy" distribution. If a community consists entirely of people of the same age, religion, social class, race, and ethnic group, they will share similar values. As folk wisdom has it, people are more comfortable when they associate "with their own kind" – even intellectuals. Diversity may create differences and conflict.

Whatever psychic comfort is gained from homogeneity may be offset, however, in other ways. By restricting the range of human experiences, it tends to encourage suspicion or scorn of what may be different. And if each man is, so to speak, a mirror image of his neighbor, life becomes a series of monotonous encounters with a dull self. Such dangers are evident in the new suburbs where age and income segregation tend to deprive children and young adults of the wisdom of their elders, and of knowledge of the culture of poverty or of the rich.

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Gans is seldom content to identify such problems without also absolving suburbia of any special complicity in having created them. The brief for the defense follows a predictable sequence: *it has always been thus* (throughout history the life space of most persons has been bounded by others of like characteristics); *the dilemma is no more serious in the suburbs than elsewhere* (there is comparatively greater class and racial uniformity in Levittown but also more ethnic and religious diversity); *the putative damage has been exaggerated* (personal idiosyncracies persist within homogeneous groups, the presence of Negroes does not guarantee better race relations, young men do not really seek the company of their senescent mothers-in-law, etc.); *the problem will in due time take care of itself* (all new communities have truncated age pyramids); *and adroit planning can remedy the apparently irremediable.*

In attempting to mediate between the competing claims of uniformity and pluralism Gans suggests that the most satisfactory option, at least in communities of homeowners who are raising small children, is "selective homogeneity at the block level and heterogeneity at the community level." By "block," he has in mind an area in which easy communition is possible – a group of, say, ten to twelve houses. Specifically the plan calls for a "heterogeneous array of homogeneous blocks, each block separated from the next by enough of a real or symbolic barrier to reassure those concerned with property values." This pattern could be created without coercion by controlling the grouping of houses by price and model, which would in turn have the effect of stratifying residents by age and class. Since both of these are powerful predictors of life styles and attitudes, a loose sort of homogeneity (the present ethnic and religious diversity would be maintained) could be readily achieved. On the other hand, churches, schools, parties and volunteer organizations could be organized on a community-wide basis and would reflect the diverse social characteristics of the various enclaves.

This plan is not meant to comfort those who justify racial segregation in the name of the right of selective association. For Gans, class, not race, is the operative distinction. In any event, he recognizes that equality and freedom of choice are higher values than a rationally planned community. He notes with some gratification that Levittown (New Jersey), unlike its Pennsylvania counterpart, early achieved successful desegregation. In Pennsylvania, as a paper of mine demonstrated, there was highly inadequate planning in advance of the arrival of the first Negro resident. In New Jersey, a state anti-discrimination law made desegregation a legal imperative, but the ease of the transition was significantly aided because the builder and the residents profited from the ineptitude of their sister community. For example, Negroes, given first choice in selection of a site, invariably opted for the more desirable peripheral lots which ad-

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joined woods and open areas. This had the effect of making Negroes less visible, thus reducing white anxiety. Another strategem specifically excluded local officials from the community-wide pro-integration Human Relations Council in order to spare them any possible political embarrassment. It is characteristic of Gans that he does not surround these necessities with unproductive critical pieties. Since he values Levittown, he prefers pragmatic triumphs to symbolic failures.

It is this stance toward the community that distinguishes this book from all previous sociological studies of suburbia. Bennett Berger preceded Gans in his demolition of the "suburban myth," and nearly a decade ago William Dobriner had already observed that even the first of the Levittowns (Long Island) did "not fit the generalizations found on research in the upper middle-class suburbs." But Berger acknowledges "the fact that I unreasonably dislike them [suburbs] has been conditioned *beyond the possibility of redemption by mere research* by the very myth of suburbia that I have helped explode." Compare this to Gans: "I believe that there are an infinite number of ways of living well and of coping with problems, all of them valid unless they hurt the people practicing them or others . . . Although a number of changes should be made in the next round of suburbanization, I can see no reason to oppose its occurrence or to discourage the building of more Levittowns."

In effect, then, Gans wishes to extend the doctrine of cultural pluralism which previously sheltered only religious, racial, and ethnic minorities to include the new middle classes. He does not find them comic or menacing, barbarians to be subdued or living corpses to be exhumed. The distinctive contribution of *The Levittowners* is that, against all such judgments, Gans insists that "sociology is a democratic mode of inquiry; it assumes that people have some right to be what they are."

This declaration of "rights" for all its attractive liberality, however, may be gratuitous. The principle of self-determination for suburbanites is nowhere under assault. But the equal right to choose does not mean that all choices are equally right. This distinction has often been neglected when the doctrine of cultural pluralism is applied to religious, racial, and ethnic behavior, for reasons partly of conviction and partly of ethical necessity. American opinion-makers have tacitly observed a moratorium on attaching "intrinsic evaluations" to cultures largely because of the plausible expectation that such invidious comparisons could result in devasting social consequences. The attribution of superiority or inferiority to the life patterns of Jews or Gentiles, Negroes or Whites, Irish or Italians is regarded as a serious offense against enlightenment. Cultures are, as the saying goes, neither better nor worse, only different. This im-

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munity from criticism has conceivably rescued untold millions from mindless prejudices and discrimination, and may contribute to whatever tranquility still prevails in the land.

But there is little reason to believe that the lower middle-class requires similar protection. It is wooed in the marketplace and flattered by the mass media. After all there are no shortages of the various Levittowns which it finds so congenial. A pluralism that willingly suspends judgment whenever it confronts an identifiable subculture, so long as it is pleasing to the participants and does not violate the master values of American society, needlessly impoverishes the public dialogue on the conditions of the good life. This attitude ignores the reality that some values, behavior patterns, and aesthetic products are better than others. Cosmopolitan intellectuals whose arrogance saddens Gans are not obliged to stand mute because Levittowners believe that they have glimpsed the promised land. It should be their special office to direct attention to a wider agenda of human possibilities.

Yet, in sum, Gans's book is important because it brings new evidence and persuasive argument to a serious and needed debate. All critics of suburbia will henceforth be obliged to confront his version of cultural pluralism (or is "populism" the better term?) and their social commentary may become more responsible. The glib stereotypes are now demolished and the issues are now revealed as more ambiguous and complex. There may or may not be more to heaven and earth than is dreamed of in suburbia, but the burden of proof now rests on the critics.

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Pollution and poverty: the strategy of cross-commitment

ROGER STARR and JAMES CARLSON

If it is precise to describe the American people – that tangled collective – as having made a commitment to achieve any single public objective, it may be said fairly that they have resolved to clean up the waters of the nation and rid them of pollution. The commitment can be substantiated, not only by a quick reading of presidential pronouncements and congressional acts and appropriations, but more emphatically by the volume of outraged condemnation of polluted waters that has appeared in the popular press, and by the astonishing total of debt approved each year by local voters for sewage collection and treatment and water-supply facilities.

Yet this commitment to end polluted water will stand up over the years only if it is soundly based. Indeed, merely keeping the American waters from getting dirtier will be a monumental task. To reverse the general trend and improve the present quality of natural water resources will be even more arduous. Yet no one can say with confidence that the public has taken an accurate measure of the cost of significant depollution.

We are pleased to acknowledge that the publication of this article was made possible by a research grant to The Public Interest *from the Carnegie Foundation – Eds.*

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This is perhaps not so serious – few public commitments are accurately surveyed as to costs. More dangerous to the long-range stability of the commitment would be an overestimate of what can actually be done to recapture the pristine clarity of the American springs, streams, and rivers. Who can predict what will happen to a vast water depollution program when energetic newspapermen and candidates for political office discover that the expenditure of billions of public dollars has not restored – *and will not restore* – the shellfish beds at the mouths of busy harbors? That it will not bring back the native brook trout to New England or clarify the turbid waters of the Missouri River? What happens also to a vitally important throw-off of a serious water depollution program – the employment of several hundred thousand relatively low-skilled male urban workers – if the public succumbs to a disillusionment as emotional as its present enthusiasm?

Swimming in the Potomac?

It is beyond challenge that emotion has played a large part in the public commitment to water purity. The press, with great skill, has assembled shocking photographs demonstrating gross misuse of national waters – the discoloration of rivers due to chemicals contained in industrial waste effluents; the shorelines made hideous by stinking organic sewage material; the algal blooms which have produced a malodorous, falsely solid surface on what may once have been sparkling streams or crystal ponds; the sometimes mysterious kills of fish left to float bellies up, dead and rotting under a summer sky. Responding to these hideous phenomena, James M. Quigley, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare said in 1961: "It is clear that our goal . . . must be to prevent any sort of water pollution."

While the sentiments that prompted this definition of the national purpose are indeed praiseworthy, it is nevertheless the case that every city in the world continues to some extent to pollute the nearest stream or body of water. No city government anywhere has put into operation a system for sewage collection and treatment so thorough that it removes all, or substantially all, of the chemical and organic pollutants which its inhabitants add to their water in the course of using it even once for washing, to say nothing of industrial processing or the carrying off of body wastes.

In 1965, when President Johnson dedicated a two-stage sewage-treatment plant on the Potomac River, he promised his audience that its completion, together with the construction of several others like it, would make swimming in the Potomac River a happy public pastime. Actually, the conditions of the Potomac that make that river less than swimmable today include not only untreated (or insuffi-

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ciently treated) sewage, but extensive growth of algae, which no one fully knows how to control; extensive silting and turbidity, which is equally untouchable by current technology; and unevenness of stream flow, which, in all cases, affects the concentration of pollution. In short, the President was promising an achievement beyond the capacity of the equipment he was asking the people to buy – and possibly beyond the capacity of any equipment yet designed. Although it is painful to say so, the Potomac River may *never* be a good place for swimming.

If one were to establish attractiveness for swimming as the standard of successful water depollution, as the President did in the case of the Potomac, one would expose the national commitment to the fairly considerable risk of a popular disappointment. A somewhat similar disillusionment has afflicted the national program for housing low-income families. Congress is experiencing great difficulty in devising a new housing program which can be confidently funded with public money. In large part, the trouble with the present low-rent public housing program is not its failure to produce worthwhile accomplishments, but its failure to accomplish all, or perhaps many, of the human objectives which its most fervent supporters had predicted for it. It has not, for example, led problem families to change their styles of life to please their neighbors. This precipitous drop from great expectations has unnerved the supporters, who might otherwise have been able to offset a few out-and-out failures with an account of the program's essential success: it has, in fact, produced a very large number of physically decent homes, satisfactory to most of the low-income families living in them.

Similarly, the Potomac sewage-treatment plants will reduce or eliminate obnoxious odors in the river, remove unsightly objects from the water, prevent the build-up of banks of organic sludge, improve the quality and range of aquatic life, reduce or eliminate potential health hazards downstream, and exemplify a national determination to prevent the wastage of a vital asset. That these considerable benefits may be endangered in the future because the river stubbornly remains unattractive for swimming indicates the critical importance of an accurate definition of the public interest in such matters.

How clean is clean?

Defining the public interest in water pollution, however, is made annoyingly difficult because the definition depends on public acceptance of a proposition that flies in the face of much homely wisdom. The unwelcome proposition is that "cleanliness" is only a relative thing and that even the typical Health Department standards which define the safety of water or milk are only approximate. Most interested laymen assume that they know what clean water is and that

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the professionals know even better. Reluctantly, they make the discovery that defining water cleanliness – or its obverse, water pollution – is a tricky and cumbersome procedure and that the definitions are neither stable nor universally accepted.

From the point of view of public policy, a definition of the cleanliness-pollution spectrum is important because it limits public expectations. From the technological point of view, the same definition establishes criteria for the design of treatment systems.

Pollution has been defined, in general terms, by Dr. Abel Wolman of Johns Hopkins University,[1] as the addition by man of too much of something to water. The phrase "by man" is important, because it recalls the clear fact that chemically pure water, containing no trace of elements other than oxygen and hydrogen, does not occur in nature. When approximated as nearly as possible by laboratory distillation, pure water is extremely expensive, with no compensating values except for special experimental uses or for industrial processes involving highly critical problems of corrosion.

Once one accepts that chemically pure water is a laboratory contrivance, not a fact of nature, one must also accept a limited goal for cleaning the water a city has used: not perfect purity, but useful depollution becomes the goal. The water must be purified to a level that will support the re-use intended for it. Many different factors influence the selection of appropriate re-use: swimming can never be achieved in streams that are naturally turbid and low in flow and oxygen; shellfish beds can scarcely be revived in or near a center of chemical production, except at a cost which probably cannot be justified in competition with other fisheries, located in other surroundings. Natural topography, population density, basic characteristics of the stream, natural chemical constituents of the water itself – these determine the appropriate uses of any water stream. Water clean enough to sail in pleasantly may not be clean enough to bathe in; water clean enough for coarse fishing – carp and catfish, for example – may not be clean enough for salmonids – trout and salmon; water clean enough for irrigating living plants may not be clean enough for living people; and water clean enough for washing streets will not necessarily be clean enough for washing floors.

Thus, the pressing questions to be settled are: How clean is "clean"? and What is "clean" worth at any given time, at any given place? For those who refuse to bathe with sewage in their tub – no matter how little sewage in how big a tub – the question of relative cleanliness may seem strangely callous. Yet, unconsciously, practical people daily treat cleanliness as only a relative matter, determined by the use to which the sullied object is to be put.

[1] "Report on Pollution to the Research Management Advisory Panel of the Committees on Science and Astronautics." Hearings of the United States House of Representatives, 89th Congress, second session, Vol. III, July 20–Sept. 13, 1966.

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We might extrapolate the public policy issue in water pollution from an argument between little Johnny and his mother over the question of whether Johnny has *really* washed his hands before dinner. Johnny, feeling that passing his hands through a stream of cold water constitutes washing, considers himself oppressed by his mother who orders him to return for second-stage dirt removal. His second effort, joining hot water, soap, and, most likely, a guest towel, passes her inspection. Yet Johnny's hands, even after a two-stage treatment, are far from being clean enough to meet the standards insisted on by a hospital's surgical director for operating room personnel. He would demand a third-stage cleaning process, lasting as long as twenty minutes, finished off with a careful drying technique. We might point out in passing that Johnny's mother would be as irritated by his adopting the surgeon's standards as she is by his own inadequate first attempt to meet hers. The public policy question of establishing water cleanliness standards similarly depends on the ultimate use to which the treated water will be put. It is important not merely to decide what level of purification will be required, but to adopt a measuring system for making certain that the level has been reached. Johnny measures cleanliness by the fact of washing his hands. Johnny's mother's measure is a visual one – the amount of dirt that she can see. The surgical director is interested in the bacterial count, whose level has probably been established over years of practice and research as a correlative result of the time spent and the type of soap, water temperature, and cleaning equipment used.

Biochemical oxygen demand

Sanitary engineers traditionally measure the amount of organic pollution in sewage by the degree of biochemical oxygen demand which the sewage imposes on the water into which it discharges. Actually, the sewage itself does not extract dissolved oxygen from the water that carries it; rather, the micro-organisms that thrive in the sewage extract oxygen from the surrounding water to carry on their own metabolic processes. Bacteria decompose the complex organic compounds in the sewage material, recombining the elements extracted with the oxygen held in the water. Under ideal circumstances, this digestion forms stable, relatively odorless nitrates, carbonates, and sulfates. As long as no disease-carrying organisms, such as the typhoid or cholera bacilli, are included in the sewage, this process constitutes the natural self-purification of watercourses. Without this purification by benign bacteria, all natural watercourses would have been hopelessly altered in color and smell due to the organic decomposition of plants and animals. Indeed, swamps, where the oxygen content of the slow-moving, warm water is inevitably low, demonstrate this fact quite dramatically.

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It is the human talent for huddling that has contributed the principal change made by civilization in the process of water self-purification. No other species of mammal has been able to crowd so many large, live bodies in such small areas. The resulting concentration of organic wastes has been catastrophic. Only the rare city that happens to be served by a rapidly flowing, oxygen-saturated major stream can avoid overloading its nearest water resource with a heavy surge of biochemical oxygen demand. Whenever this demand exhausts the free oxygen supply in the water, benign self-purification stops and anaerobic bacteria start to decompose stable sulfates into malodorous gases. Even before that dismal point has been reached, the reduction of oxygen in the water will probably have killed fish or discouraged their reproductive instincts and capabilities. The balance of other animal and vegetable life in the water will have been knocked askew; the rivers or lakes will have begun to smell; and the public will have demanded action. In 1858–1859, for example, low rainfall in England reduced the flow of the Thames. As a result, the dissolved oxygen in the shrunken river was overwhelmed by London's sewage bacteria. For two summers, frantic Londoners suffered from what became known as the "Great Stink of London." Such an offensive smell rose from the river that travelers rode miles out of their way to avoid the city; the courts of law recessed on windless days; and the houses of parliament could conduct business only behind pans filled with chloride of lime. Everyone in London expected that the grotesque odors would presage a major epidemic of cholera or typhoid. In fact, the health of Londoners survived the Great Stink far better than their tempers. Louis Pasteur, who first discovered the uses of benign bacteria, explained that smell and disease may have no direct relationship.

Since Pasteur, the sanitary engineer has recognized the impossibility of sterilizing sewage and has sought rather to design systems for collecting and then treating it in a way that would encourage the bacteria to complete as much as possible of their purifying work *before* the sewage joined the natural waterway. In this tradition, President Johnson called for "a national program to prevent water pollution at its source" in his 1965 message to the Congress. The President's objective seems both reasonable and simple. Nevertheless, the nation was, in 1965, far from this goal. Only about one-quarter of the sewage in the United States was receiving two-stage treatment, a process which, under ideal conditions, may satisfy 90 per cent of the biochemical oxygen demand before the flow is released into the stream of natural water. About 30 per cent of the nation's sewage was receiving one-stage treatment which might reduce its biochemical oxygen demand by as much as 35 per cent under ideal conditions. The remaining 45 per cent of the nation's sewage was being dumped, raw and untreated, into the streams and water re-

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sources of the nation, where its bacteria satisfied all of their oxygen need by extracting it from the natural waters. While the President called for 100 per cent removal of the biological pollution, the nation stood below the 50 per cent mark.

Who is to do what?

This seems so clear a problem that public policy should be easy to frame: proceed to two-stage treatment everywhere, to take care of the biochemical oxygen demand, and develop further methods for removing the newer chemical pollutants where necessary. Unfortunately, conditions shaping the possible re-uses of water vary so widely through the nation that general propositions have only limited usefulness. From this disparity follows the question: Who is to do what? Cities, after all, are rarely benefited by their own expenditures on sewage-treatment facilities; usually, these vast expenditures are vitiated by the inactivity of an upstream city, or else they clear up the waterstream for the delectation of those who live farther down toward the mouth. Thus, on almost every specific decision – what is the best classification system for a city's water? what kind of a plant should be built where? – experts of unquestioned reputation find themselves in disagreement.

In the case of Detroit, for example, a team of sanitary experts recently recommended *against* the same two-stage processing which the President of the United States appears to have urged the entire country to adopt as a bare minimum (he said that we must stop *all* pollution; the two-stage processing stops only about 90 per cent of the organic pollution). The President's proposition notwithstanding, the experts found that Detroit is peculiarly well served by rich sources of dissolved oxygen in the Detroit and St. Clair Rivers. The sanitary engineers concluded in a formal report that, if Detroit continued to reduce the biochemical oxygen demand of its sewage by 35 per cent with single-stage treatment, the oxygen-rich Detroit River could itself well provide the oxygen needed to complete the digestion of the sewage in the river, without adversely affecting the aquatic life in the river, or causing a build-up of solids along its banks, or hurting the city's drinking water supply (which it extracts from the same Lake Erie into which the Detroit River empties). In reaching the conclusion, the experts took into account not only the present needs of Detroit and its surrounding counties, but the predicted population increase for the next fifty years. The report,[2] incidentally, was made to the Supervisors' Inter-county Committee, covering six counties of the State of Michigan. These county govern-

[2] Report on Metropolitan Environmental Study, Six County Metropolitan Area Southeastern Michigan, National Sanitation Foundation, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1964.

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ments would have to pay for additional sewage-treatment plants and sewer-collection facilities. Merely to keep up the existing system, and provide intercepting sewers to attach new population centers to the present one-stage plants, the consultants foresaw a cost of $184 million, measured by 1964 prices.

At just about the same time as the Detroit report was being prepared, Leon Weinberger, David G. Stephen, and Francis Middleton, all important officials in the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, wrote a paper for the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences.*[3] By implication at least, they suggested a diametrically opposed course of action. This second group of sanitarians pointed out that, even if the nation as a whole installs two-stage treatment plants capable of removing 90 per cent of the biochemical oxygen demand from its sewage, the actual organic pollution in the streams of America will be getting worse within twenty-five years. (They based this gloomy prophecy on estimated population growth.) This second group of experts would almost certainly not have advised the City of Detroit to remove only 35 per cent of the biochemical oxygen demand from its sewage. They make clear their belief that the dissolved oxygen content of any river is too uncertain a foundation for long-range planning. The federal administration, of which they were high officials, had already suggested that Lake Erie requires special steps by all the cities emptying their sewers into it and its tributaries; Mr. Weinberger and his colleagues added that pollutants other than biochemical oxygen demand are of increasing danger. A single cycle of urban water use may add common salt to the water in a concentration that approaches the safe limit for *all* dissolved solids (500 parts per million), as specified by the United States Public Health Service. To remove such inorganic pollutants, as well as "refractory" organic compounds which are not subject to bacteriological digestion, advanced water-treatment systems will be required. These advanced treatment systems are yet to be perfected, but current experiments are founded on the notion that all municipal wastes first will be passed through a two-stage purification process. In other words, these experts feel that *all* municipal systems require treatment to remove 90 per cent of the biochemical oxygen demand, even if only as preparation for the *advanced* treatment which is rapidly becoming necessary to remove other pollutants.

Reconciling local interests and national need

When the experts disagree, how shall mere legislators frame a sound program? A platform nailed together from the ideas *shared*

[3] Leon W. Weinberger, David G. Stephen, and Francis M. Middleton, "Solving Our Water Problems — Water Renovation and Re-use." CXXX (July 8, 1966), 131–154.

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by disputing experts might provide a good start. Both teams agree that present and future water cleaning requires more than the removal of biochemical oxygen demand: the development of new chemical processes has added whole new families of pollutants to the sewage flow. Viruses may require new sterilization processes. Both groups of experts agree that local considerations must be reconciled with national needs in the formulation of water policy. The Detroit consultants reporting to their clients, the Detroit consumers, advise against spending local money for treatment plants which are not necessary to meet local needs and local problems. Even though federal officials emphasize the national scope of the pollution problem, they acknowledge that their picture of future purification requirements may present "a potentially misleading view because it deals with a nationwide picture, while pollution is much more a 'local' phenomenon."

Still, the reconciliation of the local and general interest in water pollution is no simpler than in any other field. In the specific case of the American federal system, it poses the familiar questions of enforcement and finance: how to adapt general rules to local problems, without becoming so lax that the purpose of federal administration is completely undermined; how to distribute federal funds for local purposes in a way that will be "fair" (practical politically) and yet meet needs that are distributed "unfairly" (anti-politically); how to establish a new federal administration that will fit into the existing federal organization, incorporating the bureaus that are germane to its purpose without engendering reflex opposition; how to assemble a federal agency without depleting the local agencies of the persons who are best able to develop the local aspects of a federal program; and so forth.

It is inevitable that the public commitment to end pollution will be shaped and limited by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1965. It is equally certain that any expert in this field will frame his recommendations in the light of the law and the facts of American political life. The law bears the scars of all the old battles of federal-local marriage. To soothe the feelings of local officials under the embarrassment of federal supervision, the law requires that each state establish its own water quality standards. These standards will be subject to federal review. Presumably no state that refused to prepare standards, or to modify them in accordance with federal wishes, would be entitled to benefits under the 1965 Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

In at least some cases, the prospect of federal intervention has actually slowed down the construction of sewage-treatment facilities. Municipalities have postponed plants designed to achieve a percentage of biochemical-oxygen-demand removal which might later fall short of yet-to-be-announced requirements. In some cases this dis-

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crepancy might involve extremely expensive redesign or even total replacement of equipment.

Neglected sewers

The Act of 1965 provides money for capital grants-in-aid to cities for the construction of specific waste-water–treatment facilities. Included in these facilities, under the bill, are interceptor sewers built to carry the waste from the outfalls of the existing sewers to the treatment plant. But, apparently in deference to a tradition of local responsibility for sewer construction, no money is provided for the construction or reconstruction of the sewer lines themselves, though in many cases these may be the weakest, most critical link in the whole process of waste-water cleansing.

Furthermore, and this is particularly vexing, it is the construction and reconstruction of the sewer lines which promise the employment of several hundred thousand urban workers of limited skill. Sewage-treatment plants are complicated structures, including as a relatively high percentage of their total cost the purchase of machinery, prefabricated metal pipes, and electric installations and controls. Treatment-plant construction requires highly skilled labor for the concrete construction work, piping, electrical wiring, and machinery mill work. (It is perhaps no coincidence that supplying the components of sewage-treatment plants rests in the hands of a few relatively large companies including Allis-Chalmers, Worthington Pump, General Electric, and Westinghouse. The highly skilled craft labor involved in the plants is well represented in the highest councils of the AFL-CIO.) Sewers are simpler. The suppliers of concrete sewer pipe are more likely to be local manufacturers. The common laborers who do most of the digging and backfill in sewer construction lack traditional access to the highest councils of the labor movement.

In the distribution of capital grants-in-aid for the construction of these facilities, the Act of 1965 demonstrates the characteristic federal difficulty of finding a compromise formula with which to fund needs. The Federal Water Pollution Control Administration may make grants-in-aid of up to 30 per cent of the cost of constructing facilities, but no single city may receive more than $1.2 million for any single facility. These two limits – no more than 30 per cent and no more than $1.2 million – are reasonably congruent in the case of smaller cities. In the case of larger cities, they diverge to a ludicrous extent.

In 1966 Congress authorized more generous limits, particularly when state governments provide matching grants for the help of cities. The Appropriations Committee, however, refused to appropriate the funds authorized, and the divergence between the authorizations and appropriations had grown to such size that the Hudson

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River Conference on water quality adopted a recommendation in September 1967 which said, in part:

> It should be understood that Congressionally authorized amounts constitute a serious moral obligation on which states and municipalities should be able to rely in planning their projects for water quality improvements. Unless Congressional appropriations are reasonably consistent with the authorizations enacted by Congress, it is obviously impossible for any municipality to receive the 55% of construction costs in Federal Aid clearly provided in the Clean Waters Restoration Act of 1966.

By any objective standard, the money now being invested in sewage-collection and -treatment facilities is too little to assure that the national commitment to clean water will be honored within a reasonable time, if ever. Yet the experts seem curiously reluctant to advocate spending on a scale sufficient to meet the commitment, e.g., to push the construction of two-stage treatment plants and tertiary advanced treatment everywhere. This reluctance may be traced to the knowledge that the whole system of sewage collection and treatment includes basic deficiencies and that the deficiencies are so great – the holes in the process of collection and treatment so serious – that, unless they are removed, the value of the complex of sewers and treatment plants is critically undermined. Treatment plants justify their public costs only if these can process all – or substantially all – of the sewage produced in the cities. The cost of plugging the holes greatly overshadows the costs of providing all the treatment plants that might ultimately be used in cleaning up the water brought to them. In fact, the cost of plugging the holes in the collection system remains very high, even when measured against national defense spending. In this circuitous set of facts, the water depollution program ultimately is held relatively motionless, and there is hardly any hope of breaking out – unless, perhaps, Congress recognizes that plugging one of the worst holes in the collection system would not only give water pollution an immense boost, but *would also constitute an urban anti-poverty program of immense size and great effectiveness.*

The three sources of pollution

There are three principal sources of water pollution that vitiate the efforts of the municipal sewage-treatment plants: agricultural activity, industrial plants large enough to discharge their effluents directly into waterways, and rainfall. Of the three, the last, rainfall, poses the worst problem for the cities.

Agricultural pollution is produced by the very large tonnages of chemical and organic fertilizers that are spread over farm land each year to spur crop growth, only to be leached from the soil by rain

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and carried into the watercourses. These fertilizers are the source of phosphorus and nitrogen compounds which stimulate, accidentally, the growth of underwater vegetation as they were intended to stimulate farm produce. At this writing, no one has propounded a workable program for reducing agricultural water pollution. City dwellers may take solace only because agricultural pollution tends to be concentrated in agricultural areas; it is, for the present, at least, not of critical importance in the water directly used by the people of the major cities of the nation.

Industrial wastes provide another generous supply of water pollution. They are especially difficult to control when the plant is large and discharges its wastes directly into the natural watercourse, instead of into the municipal sewage system. When industries use municipal sewage systems for their waste disposal, municipal governments should be able to negotiate satisfactory levels of in-plant treatment so that the industrial-waste load will be supportable by the municipal treatment program. This hope shines brightest when state, regional, or federal authorities press the city to maintain specific quality levels in its sewer effluent.

The pollutants added by industrial processes may include not only chemicals and organic waste (as for a meat packing plant), but even heat. Electric generating stations use large quantities of river waters to condense high pressure steam after it has passed the turbines; in the course of cooling the steam the river water is itself heated. The list of such offenses could be extended indefinitely. The problem here is devising a policy which will, to the satisfaction of the courts, if necessary, require the offending industries to spend considerable sums of money for benefits they will believe generally to be remote from their own vital interests. The improvements must be so managed that the industries will be given financial assistance in meeting them on those occasions when such assistance is important to their survival; yet they must also be applied with such consistency that there will not grow up some sheltered areas in the nation to which industries threatened by anti-pollution regulation may escape, in much the way that ship owners are able to escape from American labor standards and maritime regulations by registering their vessels under the Liberian flag. A policy of dealing with industrial pollution must also avoid penalizing those industries which are peculiarly susceptible to foreign competition if critically expensive procedures are required.

There is ground for hope that, subject to firm and fair pressure for reasonable effluent standards, industry will eventually discover cheap, or even profitable, means for raising effluent standards. The chemical or even the physical properties (including heat) which are harmful in natural watercourses may even be of commercial value after being extracted from the effluent.

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Drowning in the rain

Finally, anyone who demands vast federal expenditures for sewage treatment comes up against the most important pollution source of all — rainfall. Rainfall poses two difficulties. The first, perhaps most frightening in its long-term effects, is the pollution of the rain water on its way through the earth's atmosphere, both at the point of condensation and after its formation as rain. Radioactive dust can make rain water radioactive; ultimately radioactive rain would pass on alarming properties to whatever it comes into contact with. Less dramatic but similarly noxious is the contamination of rain water by polluted air. There is evidence that rain water may pick up phosphorus from the atmosphere, probably by passing through a smoke-polluted zone. If the rain will supply phosphorus, why spend millions on plants that will purge it from the sewer lines? There may be innovations to deal with this phenomenon before a critical point is reached; in the meantime, polluted rain mocks the effort to remove phosphorus and other similar elements from the municipal sewage.

The second type of rain-induced pollution in the closed system of sewage treatment raises a critical and immediate issue. Unless sewers and treatment systems can deal with the heavy flow of rain water produced by a storm, the whole process of treatment is negated to a degree that may not be obvious. The fact is that *American municipal sewage systems cannot deal adequately with the storm water flow produced within the city itself.*

This inadequacy of the urban sewer system derives directly from its history. Sewage systems in the modern Western world were not originally devised to carry off domestic and industrial wastes. They were, rather, intended to drain rain water that previously accumulated in the streets, turning these latter, especially before the days of paving, into mud bogs. Paris constructed its first sewers in 1663; local edict strictly forbade the depositing of household wastes into the rain-water collection and drainage system. Characteristically, household wastes were dropped into closet privies inside even the most sumptuous buildings; the wastes remained at the bottom of dry wells. The common European phrase "water closet" distinguishes the modern facility from its predecessor.

The decision to permit household wastes to be introduced into the storm-drainage systems did not come easily. In England it followed careful epidemiological research into the cause of an outbreak of cholera, in 1854, in the area surrounding London's Broad Street water pump. The research indicated a curious pattern of cholera cases; some houses were struck hard, whereas others were apparently immune from attack. A few cases appeared in houses located at a fairly considerable distance from the pump. At length the investi-

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gators established that the stricken households drew their water from the Broad Street pump; several householders came from a distance to draw water from the pump because they especially savored its taste! Study of the pump itself indicated that the pipes bringing water to it were jointed defectively and that the joints were being penetrated by domestic sewage from the closet privy of an adjacent building. A resident in the building had been reported as one of the first cholera cases in the series. This led to the conclusion that the domestic sewage could not be left in the soil surrounding the water mains. Accordingly house drains were allowed to be connected with the storm drains.

A similar pattern was followed in the United States, beginning in Boston. The storm-water drainage system preceded the domestic-sewage transportation need; when the latter became established, domestic house drains were joined to the existing system. Later in the nineteenth century, city engineers combined storm-water and sanitary-sewage systems for all cities. In recent years, however, many cities have insisted on separate closed systems for the sanitary and storm flows in newly settled areas.

Combining storm flow and sewage flow

There is, in fact, nothing unreasonable in the combination of storm and domestic-sewage drainage in a single piping system. Economy results from the combination because the size of the water flow produced by any considerable rainstorm greatly exceeds the domestic-sewage flow. Any system of pipes large enough to carry the storm water reasonably to be expected in North America will also be big enough to carry the domestic-sewage flow with only slight modifications. However, when the domestic sewage is added to storm-water flow, design criteria become tremendously important. If a storm-water drainage system is overtaxed in an unusually severe storm, the results are unpleasant and embarrassing; streets and cellars flood, manholes become fountains when the main lines cannot dispose of the flow reaching them from the branch lines, etc. But the unpleasant back-up becomes obnoxious and dangerous if the storm water also contains the domestic-sewage flow. This is one consideration that has led cities to require, in new areas, the installation of separate systems, sealed against cross-contamination.

Another consideration is even more serious. This is related to the design of the sewage-treatment facility. The facility must be big enough to treat the maximum expected flow of municipal sewage, with a margin for growth and safety. Natural economy in capital costs, together with an even more significant economy in continuing operational costs, makes it highly desirable to keep the facility as small as possible, consistent with meeting basic demands placed on it. The addition of storm water to the sanitary flow adds a volume of

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water which distorts that flow far beyond the safety margin of the treatment plant. In a typical American city, the population produces a general water flow of about 125 gallons per capita per day. In a city as large as Chicago, this means a daily flow of about 425 million gallons. A one-inch rainstorm would produce a run-off, in the city's combined sewers, of an additional 1.1 billion gallons – three times the sanitary-sewage flow.[4] In order to accept and treat this great surge of water, a sewage facility four times its maximum size would have to be designed for treating sanitary sewage alone. To avoid the overwhelming cost incurred by construction on such a scale, sanitary engineers deliberately design plants that will handle only the dry weather flow of combined storm and sanitary sewers. When rain produces an augmented flow, any water in excess of the designed capacity of the treatment facility is diverted directly into the natural watercourse without any treatment whatever. No procedure has been found to separate the sanitary-sewage flow from the storm-drainage flow; therefore, each significant storm, in a city with combined sewers, nullifies the entire sewage-treatment effort and discharges a considerable volume of raw sewage into the very bodies of water which the treatment program was designed to protect.

The storm and the cities

Generally, sanitarians agree that the consequences of the bypass of storm water is serious; disagreement exists as to how serious. Dr. Wolman has pointed out that at most only 2 per cent of the total stream pollution in the United States comes from storm flooding of combined sewers. On the other hand, a report of the United States Public Health Service views separation of the two systems of storm and sanitary sewers as essential because interruption of the treatment of sanitary-sewer effluents poses a pollutional effect of major consequence to *American cities,* if not to the country as a whole. At the dedication of the Newtown Creek sewage-treatment facility in July 1967, Deputy Mayor of New York Robert Sweet, speaking for Mayor Lindsay, implicitly accepted the very serious view of storm-water pollution taken by the Public Health Service. He said, in part, that "in a heavy rain this plant, like all the others, will be overloaded. And much of the sewage will have to be bypassed around it and dumped directly into the rivers . . . [To] dig up and replace New York's hundreds of miles of sewer pipes would cost billions of dollars that we do not have." It has been argued by other experienced sanitary engineers that the storm water flushing of the combined sewer system is even more serious than might be imagined merely by the frequency

[4] "Pollutional Effects of Storm Water and Overflows from Combined Sewer Systems." United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, November 1964.

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of storms. In their view, the way in which sewers have traditionally been constructed makes stagnant areas almost inevitable. The sewage that collects at these points is carried off only by the heavy rainfall flow. As a result, these discharges contain some of the densest pollutional matter.

Dr. Wolman's statement limiting the nature of the problem must be read carefully in context. It was made in the course of his discussion of water-pollution technology for the Committee on Science and Astronautics. Throughout the entire report, Dr. Wolman cautioned the committee against accepting grandiose objectives in water pollution without adequate investigation into their practicability, need, and cost. In the specific case of storm- and sanitary-sewer separation, he was discouraging the adoption of a *total* national program to achieve this end without consideration of its costs or a true appreciation of its difficulties. Dr. Wolman has so frequently stressed the local aspects of pollution problems that he would not characteristically seek to dismiss the local importance of sanitary-sewer flooding. In the urban areas in which this flooding occurs, its contribution to the pollution of waterways is much more than 2 per cent. Psychologically and politically its importance may be greater still. This type of pollution afflicts those areas which towns and cities are striving to make clean or to keep clean; this pollution is particularly damaging because it hits the water re-use in which the public is most interested; it sets limits on the efficiency of any water-treatment process whatever; and, if advanced sewage treatment were ultimately to become general practice, the continuance of gross bypassing of *all* treatment measures by a single rainfall could not be tolerated.

What the skeptics say

Skeptics who doubt the wisdom of separating storm sewers from sanitary sewers would point out that storm run-offs themselves contain pollutants. They carry all the petroleum-linked chemicals found on the streets; all the detergents used to wash automobiles; the salts used to melt street ice; and the organic wastes left on the streets and sidewalks by animals. Since the downspouts from roof gutters would be connected to the storm-sewer system, the storm run-offs would even carry off bird droppings. A modified treatment system, including some sort of disinfection process, would have to be provided for the storm-water sewer effluent. No one has yet designed such a treatment process. The skeptics might further argue that methods other than separation might be developed to serve the same purpose: giant cisterns, for example, which would store rain-swollen run-offs from the combined system until they could be conveniently handled by the treatment facilities. But no one has yet designed such a system of holding, or settling, basins. They would be of a tremendous size,

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and might in any case be menaced by the occurrence of several rainstorms in quick succession that would overload the basin. Since the sewage solids would have a tendency to settle in such basins, such a system could necessarily be of far more complex design than the name might suggest.

Finally, skeptics argue that the cost of sewage separation is too high. It is certainly too high for the cities to meet without serious financial help from the federal government. Its cost is high not only in direct monetary terms, but especially when augmented by indirect additional expense. The rearrangement of the sewage-pipe system in many cities will require the relocation of other underground distribution systems, cause serious traffic snarls, and adversely affect the business transacted by retail establishments, although for limited periods of time. Separation would even involve interior work on the plumbing systems of existing buildings, in which, for example, roof drains are combined with the sanitary-waste pipes.

Possibly these indirect costs push sewer separation beyond the limit of acceptable costs for water depollution goals, at least until the water supply problem becomes more critical than it has so far. Yet, whatever the difficulties, it is clear even from the words of the skeptics that ultimately sewer separation is required if water pollution is to be reduced to acceptable levels. It may not be required everywhere in every city at once, but in the words of at least one serious analyst of the sanitary engineering situation, "Somewhere in the desk of every big city public works department, there is surely a design of a sewer separation project that would make a serious contribution to cleaning the city's recreational waters, or restoring some vital stretch of river to dignified use."

The cost of treatment plants

The pressing nature of this set of needs urges one to look at the costs of sewer separation and what these costs would buy.

In calculating the fiscal costs of separating storm and sanitary sewers, the estimator must first face the complicating fact that such a program must be *added* to the costs involved in removing those other water-treatment defects for which the Congress has already accepted responsibility. The Congress having in principle encouraged every municipality in the nation to install two-stage sewage-treatment facilities, some studies are on hand to indicate these original costs. The estimates are plausible in appearance. Yet all recent experience with construction costs indicates that such estimates are almost invariably low.

The 1966 State Sanitary Engineers' survey indicated that some 37.4 million people were living in communities with inadequate sewage treatment. Some 12.8 million of these people (6.7 million with

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collection systems but no plants, and 6.1 million with neither plants nor collection systems) were in need of new plants. Over 24 million needed the equipment in their plants replaced with newer, more effective facilities.

The per capita costs of constructing treatment plants that contain complete secondary facilities vary widely, depending on the method of treatment chosen, the size of the plant, the region in which it is to be constructed, and a number of other considerations. In gross terms, using a broad brush, the United States Public Health Service concludes that a figure of $75 per capita is not unreasonable. Putting aside the gloomy prospect that this figure might be as much as 50 per cent on the low side, one can say that the construction of new secondary-treatment plants for this 12.8 million population would, according to the Public Health Service estimate, reach about $960 million. Site acquisition costs would bring this figure up to $1,150 million.

The cost of waste-treatment equipment and its installation can run between 15 and 20 per cent of the total replacement cost of the plant itself. Since the raw Public Health Service figure did not include any costs for modernizing existing plants – many of which date back to WPA days – their costs must be added in, too. Adding them fairly, one must assume that existing plants need expansion as well as modernization of machinery and replacement of parts. Probably this will cost not only 15 to 20 per cent of replacement cost, but as much as 50 per cent. This means that, to provide adequate treatment facilities for the 24.6 million people who are served by deficient treatment plants, we must add another $935 million to these backlog costs.

The cost of sewers

This does not include any cost for sewers themselves, for the federal government makes no contribution to sewer-construction costs. How shall these costs be calculated? Per capita sewer-pipe requirements have gradually crept upward over the years, as sewage systems have wound out into the less densely populated suburbs. In 1940 there were ten feet of sewage pipe in operation, per person, for the population served. Today this figure is about sixteen feet, per person, for the population served. Since the nascent suburbs would be included in any new system, providing sewers for the 6.1 million people in the 2,661 unsewered communities recorded in the latest State Sanitary Engineers' survey would probably require about sixteen feet of pipe per person – almost 98 million feet of pipe. And at a total estimated installation cost of $20.00 per foot, the total figure would be around $2 billion.

Thus, the total cost of eliminating the municipal backlog of treat-

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ment plants alone, then, would come close to $4.1 billion. This would provide nothing for the advanced systems that will become necessary within twenty-five years. Nor would this figure provide for the separation of sanitary and storm sewers, although the Public Health service reports that "approximately 59 million people in more than 1,900 communities are served by combined sewers and combinations of combined and separate sewer systems."

Estimates of the cost of complete separation of storm-water and sanitary sewers in fifteen United States cities were obtained by a Public Health Service Survey about three years ago. The costs of complete separation at that time ranged from $187 per capita to $915 per capita, depending on the city. This extremely wide range of estimates limits the validity of assuming that the average of this survey can be considered to reflect the cost trends in the nation as a whole. In addition, the figures were not all collected in the same year, so that the estimates for some cities are less reflective of current cost patterns than others. Also, the trend in per capita costs runs lower in the larger cities than in the smaller ones. The arithmetic average for the fifteen cities came to $465 per capita, whereas an average weighted by the populations of each of these cities came out somewhat lower: $434 per capita. These findings do not appear to be reasonable on a priori grounds. The huge costs involved in snaking around existing utility conduits, tearing up and repairing streets and sidewalks, traffic relocation, and the like and the higher labor costs that exist in larger cities generally would, intuitively, seem to outweigh the savings in material costs that would occur in constructing sewers in areas of high population density.

The only available estimates of the cost of separating combined sewers, then, appear suspect. Added to this is the additional consideration that storm water, as we have seen, is itself polluted and must be treated in some fashion. The closer we look, the larger the figures loom.

The weighted per capita cost figure, $434, multiplied by the population using combined sewers, 59 million, provides a cost estimate of $26 billion to eliminate the backlog. This figure appears extremely conservative. Almost everyone agrees that, in fact, this figure would be in the $30 billion range, or over $500 per capita, at least. A more pessimistic (or realistic) thinker might very well estimate the total at $100 billion, to include some of the consequential costs.

By the most cheerful account, then, eliminating the backlog of unmet sewage-treatment needs of the nation's municipalities would cost at least $35 billion. This expenditure would provide for separate sewage-treatment systems in all municipalities that currently have combined systems and would bring every plant in the nation up to the level of full secondary treatment.

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Onward from the backlog

We have already mentioned the prognosis of the federal experts who claim that pollution will be worse in 2016 than in 1966 even if all municipalities provide well-operated secondary treatment. As the population grows, advanced systems will be needed.

To install tertiary (or advanced) treatment systems in every municipal plant would cost a large sum, obscure in its ultimate dimensions because no such plant has yet been built. It is hoped by the researchers that tertiary treatment can be provided for about the $75 per capita cost estimated for a new conventional treatment plant, thus doubling the capital cost of sewage-treatment facilities (or whatever the per capita cost of conventional treatment is at the time of the technological breakthrough to tertiary treatment). Ideally, the higher social benefit that would ensue from the elimination of a higher proportion of pollutants might make higher costs acceptable politically by local government taxpayers. Although it is theoretically possible to determine the incremental cost that these increased benefits could bear,[5] practically the budgets of most municipalities are not geared to the intricacies of the cost-benefit approach; nor are the bond markets where most of the funds would have to be acquired.

Moreover, although – in the aggregate – it seems likely that municipalities could justify higher per capita costs on the basis that the ultimate users would pay higher rates to obtain cleaner water, the individual city is not necessarily in a position to do this. In most cases, the cleaner water emanating from *its* waste-treatment plant would not benefit *it,* but the municipality downstream. (This, of course, is a different story when the municipality must re-use its own waste water.) This argument could be applied with equal intensity to the separation of combined sewers, or even to the installation of complete secondary treatment, for that matter. We must assume, then, a certain amount of public willingness to undertake the task of pollution reduction, even if the particular municipality in question is not itself directly affected by the final result. How much more, then, would a municipality be willing to pay for complete advanced waste treatment?

There are no figures yet in existence that can give anywhere near an adequate answer to this question. Some studies have attempted to attach a dollar value to the concept of clean water in particular geographic areas, however.[6] And the average operating costs of purification in municipal *water* treatment facilities – part of

[5] A. V. Kneese, *The Economics of Regional Water Quality Management* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964).

[6] H. C. Bramer, "Economics and Water Pollution Abatement," *Water and Sewage Works,* CXIII, No. 2 (February 1966).

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which may be eliminated by advanced *waste*-treatment facilities – can also serve as a rough guide. Perhaps, if the cost of advanced waste-treatment facilities could be brought down to a rate about one-third higher than conventional secondary treatment – around $100 per capita by today's figures – large-scale conversion by municipalities would follow. Conversion costs on this basis could be anywhere between $6 and $12 billion, depending on whether the 124 million people now estimated to be served by one form or another of sewage treatment had either to build entirely new plants or to convert existing ones. *Complete* elimination of the municipal backlog, then, even assuming a reasonable cost breakthrough in advanced treatment facilities, would reasonably be expected to reach $45 billion. If we take the pessimistic view, we are now well over $120 billion.

These estimates, in turn, are all based on what apears now to be a happy fiction, namely, that the total population will remain constant and that the fraction living in nonfarm, nonrural areas that will be served by sewage systems will not change. All present demographic forecasters disagree with this assumption.

Estimates of the population that will have to be served by 1975 range from 157 to 171 million, or a net increase of between 33 and 47 million. Treatment plants and sewer lines for this increment would add between $19 and $27 billion more, in current dollars. Add in a depreciation factor of 2 per cent per year to the existing stock, and an annual construction cost increase of 2.5 per cent, and as much as $100 billion *could* be spent between now and 1975 – just to eliminate the municipal backlog and keep up with population growth. The gloomiest prophets are now reaching near the $200 billion mark.

Toward cross-commitment

Whatever the needs of the American population in the year 2017, only a zealot will believe that the nation is prepared now to make a very substantial down payment against an ultimate $120 to $200 billion outlay, carrying with it no benefit other than the easing of a problem in the year 2017. Even if the immediate objectives are scaled down to cover only the known backlog of sewer and treatment needs, and the most pressing storm and sanitary-sewer separation and treatment plants – costing $20 billion over ten years – the current level of Congressional appropriation for water treatment affords little confidence that such generosity will be forthcoming. A federal budget of $2 billion per year for water depollution enforcement, research, and grants-in-aid on a much more substantial scale, covering sewers as well as treatment facilities, would involve a twenty-fold increase in federal expenditures over the current (1968) levels.

At the same time, however, as the legislatures and the public renew their commitment to clean water, another group of legislators

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and perhaps another section of the public talk about the need to assume a determined national commitment to obliterate poverty and to enable a large section of the American Negro population to "catch up" with the general level of 1968 American material prosperity. Their commitment, so-called, might be phrased in different ways by different spokesmen, some stressing its economic aspects, others stressing its moral imperatives. Irrespective of the hypotheses which underlie the commitment, those who urge this commitment on the body politic envelop it in the form of large appropriations of federal funds to be spent within the urban areas, most particularly in the urban areas which are largely, if not entirely, occupied by nonwhites of low income.

Thus, Senator Ribicoff has suggested a $50 billion fund with which to war on urban poverty. Other senators have suggested that the war in Vietnam be stopped in order to provide funds to redeem the nation's promises to its Negro citizens. Other groups, including the Urban Coalition, have suggested that a reshuffling of "natural priorities" is necessary to generate the funds needed to deal with the poverty crisis in the cities and, no doubt, the racial turbulence which they believe is connected with it.

Unfortunately, none of the advocates of this "commitment" makes clear how he proposes to spend the money he urges be appropriated, and there is little evidence in the recent behavior of the Congress to suggest that a vast cutback in military expense and disbursements on lunar exploration (all of which have been spent on this planet, incidentally, and most in this hemisphere) would result in the transference of equal sums of money to a miscellaneous treasury account marked, simply, "cities."

Housing?

When faced with the question of how the money should be spent, those legislators who are most insistent on the acceptance of the commitment betray an understandable but unfortunate tendency toward vagueness. They mention, as possible outlets for the money, a vast increase in the quality of houses available to low-income urban dwellers, the opening of hundreds of thousands of new jobs, and a tremendous improvement in educational facilities and staff. Although none will disagree with the general desirability of each of these improvements, the translation of that very desirability into a program for spending $50 billion remains clouded and mysterious. Housing, after all, does not spring into existence by the mere appropriation of money. By housing for low-income families the senators could not be referring to publicly owned housing; one might point out that New York City, where more than 500,000 people live in public housing, and where the institution has met with its greatest degree of accept-

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ance, has managed to spend only $3 billion on public housing in the past thirty years. The pace is hardly accelerating, because any decision to build public housing or to bring older, privately owned low-rent housing into good condition at public expense must win approval in the local political arena. If the proposal is to build low-rent housing in areas now occupied by higher income families, it will be strenuously fought by one group of citizens; if it is concentrated in existing low-rent areas, it will be fought by another. Senator Robert Kennedy, one of the strongest supporters of generous commitment to the reduction of urban poverty, has attacked this second location for public housing as a "ghetto within a ghetto." Whatever the merits in this description, it indicates the Senator's belief that federal housing funds must be spent in a new way, cutting across the lines that have traditionally divided cities– perhaps all cities – into sections that reveal the general income level of their residents. Until an institution has been developed that can carry forward such a program, maintain properly the homes built by it, and employ a significant number of the urban poor in its unfolding, the nation (and the urban poor) may well have a long wait. There is no evidence at hand to suggest that this "anti-social class" housing will be any more acceptable to the local government and its constituents than public housing has been; even less evidence supports the belief that citizens earning enough money to live elsewhere will move into housing developments in which they are offered the inducement of paying more rent for the same accommodations than their poorer neighbors. Nor does the evidence support the belief that the urban poor (or their Congressional supporters) are prepared to wait any number of years while such a program is developed. Nor does the evidence indicate that Congress is prepared to support such a program on any significant scale.

Public jobs?

Senator Ribicoff has suggested that the funds appropriated should be used also to provide jobs for the unemployed and the underemployed urban poor. His is only one of a host of similar suggestions, but none has been specific as to how and by whom these jobs are to be made available. If by direct federal subvention, they are presumably to be made available by an increase in the public employment rolls. In what types of work? As things now stand, cities are having difficulty recruiting skilled and semi-skilled personnel for office and field work. How would increases in funds from federal sources change this picture? Would the new funds train the underemployed and the unemployed for skilled work of a relatively advanced type? There are, of course, heartening examples of individual and even group successes in such training – using some selected welfare mothers to counsel other welfare mothers or to provide hospital

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after care – but, measured against the size of the underemployed group, the potential of this specific hope seems entirely too small.

The alternative, on the public payroll, is unskilled labor. What shall the cities employ unskilled labor for? Suggestions in this field have run generally to cleaning of public buildings, park maintenance, street cleaning – jobs, in short, which, however desirable they may be from the point of view of the cities, are more suitable for part-time employment than for the development of employment regularity and pride. Training for higher skills must be one of the main objectives in any struggle to mitigate the effects of generations of second-class citizenship. It seems hardly a triumph to employ the Negro as a public porter, after years of complaint that his role in industry had been confined to that of private porter.

In any case, this complaint may be supererogative. It seems unlikely that the Congress will vote significant funds to employ able-bodied males full time in a reincarnation of the leaf-raking aspects of the WPA.

If, on the other hand, the senatorial leaders of the drive for "commitment" to the eradication of urban poverty mean to use private industry to absorb the unemployed and to use the underemployed to greater advantage, they come up against a group of formidable obstacles. Senator Kennedy has proposed that industries be encouraged to locate in critical urban areas, and to put the urban unemployed to work, by a system of income tax deferrals. Is the subsidy adequate to stimulate the response sought? Can greater stimuli be found that will not provide unfair competition with existing industrial plants or with other regions already benefitting from special federal subsidies? Would such subsidies actually increase the total level of employment or merely result in a transfer of employment from one site to another? In the shadow of these uncertainties, how much money would the Congress really provide to stimulate the location of industry in poverty-stricken urban areas? The planners of the British government have for a number of years attempted to move industry from the south to the north of England. Despite far greater government controls over British land use than Americans have yet accepted, this effort at industrial relocation can scarcely be regarded a success. By and large, the relocation of industry to achieve social objectives, even in socialist countries, has not proven itself.

Education? Income supplements?

Similarly, education, however sorely needed, does not promise to absorb the funds which Senator Ribicoff has been talking of, or, where it promises to absorb them (in better facilities, higher teacher salaries, smaller classes, etc.), this expenditure seems to have little immediate bearing on the urban poverty problem. Observers of the

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attitudes of young Negroes in the disorganized homes that are characteristic of urban poverty report that the motivation for learning is most difficult to inspire if there is no present clear evidence that education will result in a job and that the job will result in a significant improvement in the conditions of life. Expenditure on education alone will not eliminate or significantly reduce urban poverty. Nor will Congressional appropriations for educational assistance be scaled in reference only to the urban needs. Instead they will be shaped by many pressures from other elements: the tradition of the relationship between federal and local government, the constitutional problem of state-church separation, the demand of the aspiring parts of the population for greater opportunities for higher education, the rural-urban conflict.

Income supplements – whether in the form of family allowances, the present welfare systems, or a guaranteed minimum income – are clearly desirable as a supplement for those workers whose earnings will not support a reasonable living standard, or for those families which lack a member who is part of the work force. By itself, however, it is surely no substitute for widened employment opportunities; nor is it a substitute for the special subsidization of major, costly elements in the family budget – housing, for example. (Family allowances in European countries have helped to keep subsidization of "social housing" to a level that is politically acceptable and does not completely confuse the price system.) It is likely, therefore, that even if Congress were to extend some form of income supplementation far byond the present parameters of the welfare system, additional work-creating, money-absorbing programs will still be required to cope with the full dimensions of urban poverty.

The economic beauty of sewers

In contrast to housing, jobs, and education – to the measure of $50 billion – the homely needs of sewer separation offer many advantages. Of all the major types of construction activity, the one that requires one of the highest proportions of unskilled labor is the placement of sewage lines. Labor Department studies indicate that common laborers account for over 40 per cent of all on-site man-hours involved in the construction of sewage lines. And on-site wages normally account for between one-fifth and one-fourth of the dollar value of a typical sewage-line contract. Adjusting for the fact that wage rates paid to laborers would be somewhat below the average for all employees on the job, the decision to undertake only the modest $30 billion expense of complete separation of sanitary and storm sewers would result in *direct* wage payments of around $2.5 billion to unskilled laborers. At an assumed annual wage of $5,000, this could generate half a million man-years of employment. That's

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enough to provide *jobs of one year's duration for three-fourths of all males in the nation who are currently unemployed for five weeks or more.*

The point is: Aside from the tremendous benefits that such an undertaking would have in improving the nation's water resources, it could also be a formidable tool in any program bent on eradicating poverty.

Roughly twenty-five cents of every dollar spent on sewer lines or treatment plants goes for direct wage payments. But, more important, *almost half* of these wages go to unskilled or semi-skilled employees. If putting people to work and the value of the work experience is recognized as a necessary first step in acquiring job skills, then expenditures for construction in this area, coupled with an active recruitment program of the unskilled unemployed, is a very efficient means of getting a lot of people to work in a relatively short space of time. Many tasks could be phased out to provide on-the-job training at higher skill levels as the job progresses, with a common laborer perhaps advancing to an apprentice carpenter, operating engineer, or brick layer by the time the job is completed.

Also, the ability of workers to place relatively large values of work in place during a given time period results in a high ratio of off-site to on-site labor in sewer-line and sewer-treatment-plant construction, compared with other construction types. Each man-hour of work performed on the construction site generates an additional 1.6 man-hours off the site. The primary beneficiaries of this multiplier effect are stone, clay and glass, and machinery manufacturers and the trade and transportation industries.

Crawling before walking

It appears that the ambitious proposals to put the poor and unemployed to work rebuilding their own environment require that the baby walk before he learns to crawl. Putting the unskilled to work in jobs that they can do, advancing them to higher skill levels as that job progresses, and paying them as they learn appears to be a necessary first step before they can be put to work building more complex structures, such as new low-rent housing projects.

A recent report published in the *Monthly Labor Review* attributes the creation of one million jobs to the intensification of the current war effort. The bulk of these jobs was in the weapons, aircraft, and communications industries. Most, however, were positions that required an existing skill level; these jobs were obviously not open to the unskilled unemployed.

These one million jobs were precipitated by a rise in the level of defense expenditures from the $48 billion level in 1965 to about $70 billion this year, an increase of some $22 billion. An expenditure

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of this magnitude in sewer and water-works construction could theoretically create 2.5 million man-years of employment; almost 500,000 of which would be unskilled or semi-skilled work in the construction industry. From the standpoint of putting the unskilled unemployed to work, the area that offers the greatest potential should be obvious.

A reconstruction of city sewers will cause inconvenience and difficulty, but these difficulties are neutral with respect to social class and local politics. The work is clearly of national importance; its effect is permanent and constructive, two qualities as important to the worker as to the newspaper reporter who will later come to expose its shortcomings and the congressmen who must vote for the appropriation. In sewer construction, one deals with private industry, working for government under a system of competitive sealed bidding, circumventing the granting of special favors to selected industries; the institution that will engage the workers is already in existence; and even the plans for specific projects are furled in the cabinets of some municipal public works departments, waiting to be pulled out at the first scent of money.

Surely, with these anti-poverty possibilities embedded in an anti-pollution program, the public would long since have pushed storm- and sanitary-sewer separation (an inevitable part of ultimate water treatment) through Congress? Yet, aside from an appropriation of $20 million a year for three years' aid to experimental projects for controlling the pollution caused by inadequately treated storm flow, the program has not moved. Greater sums have been appropriated – both under the heading of Water Pollution Control and under that of the War on Poverty – for projects which may be less helpful to either, let alone to both simultaneously.

Cross-commitment as a strategy

The reason for the lag may lie in the difficulty of developing a Congressional strategy of *cross-commitment* – and the failure of the administration so far to provide one. Cross-commitment – the deliberate interaction of two programs aimed at different goals because each may be important to the goal of the other – is recognized by the administration as essential to the effectiveness with which cities are to cope with their problems. The "Model Cities" Bill exhorts each mayor to combine separately motivated federal programs within a section of his city to accomplish an end greater than that for which each was originally proposed. Implicitly, the bill appears to recognize that problems succumb sometimes to a flanking attack, or a simultaneous envelopment, more readily than to a frontal assault. Yet Congress appears slow to recognize that the War on Poverty can provide strong support for a special attack on water pollution.

One reason for the slow pace lies in the obvious fact that, to con-

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duct its business, each house of Congress is divided into committees and subcommittees whose chairmen become, in many cases, almost professionally expert in the fields of activity in which their committees specialize. In the field of water pollution, Congressman John A. Blatnik and Senator Edmund S. Muskie come to mind as having demonstrated long-continuing devotion, intelligence, and perseverance. The War on Poverty has called for the activity of a separate group of legislators who have demonstrated their deep concern for urban problems and have unquestionably been identified by their constituents as champions of this special battle. It would not be easy for the latter group to confide this battle into the hands of another group of legislators, to whom, presumably, would go the medals for a victory. The difficulty of this transfer of command is increased by a tendency to reduce the grubby economics of poverty and wealth to a matter of high moral imperatives.

Under these circumstances, the Administration must take the lead in examining the strategy of cross-commitment, in pushing for water-pollution legislation that will significantly affect urban poverty, and in exploring other government investment programs that might produce similar precious, incidental benefits. To push water depollution for its anti-poverty effects will require political skills of a high order, including perhaps some of the persuasive ambiguity of expression that distinguished Franklin D. Roosevelt. This will naturally fail to please those who believe that progress is made only by occupying conspicuous ground and displaying the moral truth on great white banners. Many young or idealistic observers of Franklin D. Roosevelt (and of Abraham Lincoln) felt disappointed from time to time at the incomprehensible refusal of these two activists to follow straight through to their objectives. Many were dismayed at a quality they called at the time "devious." In retrospect, action looks clearer than rhetorical clarity, and, on this proposition, the strategy of cross-commitment must have its justification.

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CURRENT READING

The New Curriculum: Power, Conflict, and Violence

The following item is taken from TC Week, *published at Teachers College, Columbia University:*

The concepts of power, conflict and violence should become part of the curriculum of the nation's schools, said Professor Francis A. J. Ianni in a recent talk at T. C.

"These concepts have become part of our national life, we see them almost every day, and we no longer can afford to avoid them in our schools," Professor Ianni told an audience of over 60 students gathered together for this year's first meeting of Dialogue.

In his talk Professor Ianni traced the increasing tendency of Negroes to resort to violence to obtain their demands and the concomitant reluctance of middle class white Americans to consider these concepts.

"To most middle class whites, power is not a critical issue because they have it," Professor Ianni said. "They do not crave it as the Negro does. If white Americans do think about it, then it is something dirty and corrupting," he said.

"This has been a year of escalating violence. The struggle for equality has been replaced by a naked grab for power in which black hands are shaking off the soothing grasp of the white liberal," Professor Ianni told his audience. "The Negro has had 300 years to learn that violence offers the most immediate means of control and power. He has learned and learned well that nobody can or will give him power; he has to take it."

The tendency of the middle class to eschew violence and keep it out of the schools has robbed the ghetto child of the right to use the methods of winning identity and power which he has learned in his own world, Professor Ianni said.

"We prudishly condemn violence and never bother to tell the Negro child that violence, like planning or striving, can and has been of constructive value when the ends and conditions of its use have been socially sanctioned," Professor Ianni said.

"We watch homes being bombed and bodies broken via television satellite with little or no sense of personal involvement," Professor Ianni pointed out. "Unlike the man in the ghetto to whom violence is what's happening, violence for the middle class is a happening, which he enters and leaves at will."

Teachers throughout the nation, whether they like it or not, have introduced power into the schools through their recent strikes in New York, Detroit, and elsewhere, Professor Ianni said.

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"Having publicly joined the quest for power, Mr. Chips can never again stand aloof from it, for it is now part of his public image," Professor Ianni said. "If teachers continue to ignore the issues of the struggle for power and condemn conflict and violence now that it is part of their own image, then education and schools become a little more absurd and teachers a little less honest."

"I hope we do develop a world where conflict and violence are just for fun and where power is justly distributed," Dr. Ianni said. "But I hope that we also continue to think about how we prepare kids to live in a world where they are not."

The Embourgeoisement of American Labor

George Bernard Shaw once called trade unionism "the capitalism of the proletariat" and nowhere else is this more true, naturally, than in the United States. The range and extent of this *embourgeoisement* has now been documented by the AFL-CIO, in a survey of union members conducted for the Federation by the John Kraft polling organization and reported in the August 1967 issue of *The Federationist*.

The general profile of the union man, as it emerged from the survey, is this:

¶46 per cent of union families are in the $7,500–$15,000 a year income range;

¶32 per cent are in the $5,000–$7,500 range;

¶nearly 50 per cent are less than forty years old, 25 per cent are less than thirty years old;

¶nearly 75 per cent of members under forty live in suburbs, nearly 50 per cent of all members now live in suburbs;

¶about 20 per cent of union members are women, about 13 per cent are Negro, and 4 per cent Mexican or Oriental;

¶54 per cent have belonged to their union for ten years or more, 25 per cent have belonged for five years or less;

¶58 per cent identify themselves as Democrats, 16 per cent as Republicans, 17 per cent as independents, 9 per cent uncertain.

What is most striking is the conservatism of the group and its middle class concerns. The Kraft poll asked union members, "What are the big problems on your mind – the things that bother you and should be getting attention?" (The poll, it should be noted, was taken at the beginning of 1967.) Fifty-three per cent spontaneously mentioned economic issues, 42 per cent discussed Vietnam, and only 33 per cent mentioned civil rights and law enforcement. Of those concerned with economic issues, the most pressing problem, by far, was taxes, and the second was the high cost of living. The significant difference was between those under thirty and those between thirty and forty-nine. Of the latter group, 55 per cent mentioned economic issues, and of these, the single largest mention – the single largest mention of any single issue among union members – was concerned with taxes (about 28 per cent), the high cost of living was mentioned

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by 13 per cent in this group. Of those under thirty, 61 per cent named economic questions as pressing, and of these 20 per cent named the high cost of living and 13 per cent said taxes. Where civil rights and law enforcement problems were raised, a significant proportion mentioned juvenile delinquency as a relevant concern. On Vietnam, the single largest group (about one-third) said the President was doing the best he can, the second largest group wanted to escalate the war, while a smaller number wanted an immediate end to the war.

No Automation Tomorrow

"To automate as completely as possible with present technology, only one major segment of the American economy, manufacturing, would require an expenditure of 2½ trillion dollars (this comes to $12,000 per man, woman, and child, and the total stock of inanimate goods in the United States has been estimated to be worth only 1/6 more, 3 trillion dollars). Even to modernize manufacturing to the levels of the new plants built in the 1950's would require 500 billion. Since total spending on new plants and equipment in manufacturing amounts to about 15 billion per year, American manufacturing could not be modernized even to the technology of the level of the 1950's for over 30 years, and this is under the extreme assumption that all the expenditure is used for modernization and none for expansion. With the current division of capital outlays between modernization and expansion, modernization to the level of new plants of the variety built in the 1950's would require about 50 years. To automate completely the manufacturing industry with no increase in total output would require 2 centuries at current rates of modernization. If we expand output at the rate necessary to keep up with population growth, however, present rates of capital formation will never result in complete automation of manufacturing unless the cost of automation is reduced to less than 1/6 of its present expense. This is unlikely to occur within the foreseeable future."

— *Yale Brozen,* Automation: The Impact of Technological Change *(Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1963), p. 4.*

The "Nonparticipants"

It is becoming increasingly clear that national measures of unemployment are quite irrelevant as far as the nation's slums are concerned. Just how irrelevant is suggested by a 1967 Labor Department analysis of slum unemployment. The analysis was based on a series of intensive surveys of employment conditions in selected slum areas in New York, Boston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Phoenix, St. Louis, San Antonio, and San Francisco.

As the Department's summary makes clear, "any thinking about unemployment in terms of 3.7 or 4 per cent just leaves the slums out. The situation there is that more than one-third are unable to earn a

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living, and 20 per cent of those who ought to be working aren't working at all." Even using the traditional statistical concept of "unemployment," the unemployment rate in these areas comes to about 10 per cent, or almost three times the national average.

But that obviously understates the seriousness of the problem. Quite apart from so-called "technical" difficulties – for example, "between one-fifth and one-third of the adult males expected (from other sources) to be part of the slum area population were 'unfound'" – the surveys uncovered a significant number of persons "who should be working, are not working and are not looking for work." These people have simply dropped out of the labor market; as far as the statistics are concerned, they do not exist.

Yet they do exist. The surveys found that the nonparticipation rate among men in the twenty to sixty-four age group (the only group for which it could be meaningfully determined) came to 11 per cent, compared to 7 per cent for the country as a whole.

Why don't they seek work? One reason could be a general awareness that, even if they found work, this would not necessarily take them out of poverty. The Department's surveys show that 21 per cent of those working full time earn less than $60 a week, or, on an annual basis, less than the "national poverty line" of $3,000.

Thus if, like two-thirds of the unemployed in these slum areas, a man lacks a high school education, or if he has record of arrests and wage garnishments, or has health problems, he may lack any incentive to seek work "even though he ought to be working." Essentially, the problem of nonparticipation, like the problem of sub-employment, is primarily personal – a problem of "inferior education, no skills, police and garnishment records, discrimination, fatherless children, dope addiction, hopelessness." As the Department's study emphasizes, "no conceivable increase in the gross national product would stir these backwaters. The problem is less one of inadequate opportunity than of inability, under existing conditions, to use opportunity."

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